

# THE EASTERN ANTHROPOLOGIST

EDITOR : D. N. Majumdar

FOREIGN EDITOR : C. von Fürer-Haimendorf

## DOUBLE NUMBER

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# THE EASTERN ANTHROPOLOGISTS

## (A Quarterly Record of Ethnography and Folk Culture)

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Each number of the Journal will include (1) Original Articles, (2) Notes and comments including the announcements and reports of the proceedings of the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, (3) Brief Communications, including short original notes and correspondence, (4) Research News and Views and (5) Reviews of Recent Books.

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# THE EASTERN ANTHROPOLOGIST

Vol. VII, Nos. 3 & 4 ]

[ March—August 1954

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society has started a centre for rural study in Jaunsar Bawar which is now being taken care of by the Community Project personnel. Three research students, G. S. Bhatt, R. D. Singh and B. Verma are studying the rural problems in Loharu, a village about nine miles from Chakrata. The programme is to continue this study for three years, so that on the basis of the base line data collected at the centre, it may be possible to evaluate the progress of the Community Development Projects. The first Report available from the centre indicates the absence of any enthusiasm of the people towards the development plans sponsored by the Project personnel. In some villages, suspicion is gaining ground against the activities of the Project, and even wild rumours are afloat regarding the aims and objects of the Departmental plans. Community Development projects can succeed if the administration and the people both work together and are activated by common ideals. Welfare if it is doled out, remains a oneway traffic and may defeat its purpose. The Khasas have a different culture pattern than that ordinarily met with in Indian villages. The high altitudes they inhabit and the hard economic conditions they face, are significant factors in their day-to-day life. The polyandrous society and family solidarity that they have developed, the group life and territorial organisation that are still sacrosanct with the people, the customary mores of living and the integrated social life of the village, all call for a planned drive to reach the hearts of the people and win them over. This can only succeed on knowledge and understanding of the attitudes and values of the people. If the officers of the project think that they are like the executive officers and not comrades of the people in the common endeavour of achieving good for the people, even *shramdan* (voluntary labour) may turn into *begar* (forced labour) and antagonise the people rather than draw the latter into a common task.

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We mentioned on these pages (Vol. VII, No. 1) about the Lucknow-Cornell Research project, set up at Lucknow, under the Ford Foundation grant for evaluation work in Community Development Project Areas. As a control, a rural research centre has been



started in Gohana-Kalan. This village is situated at a distance of about 8 miles from Lucknow and only 2 miles from Bakhshi-kal-Talab, which incidentally, is the Ford Foundation Centre for training Village Level Workers. Gohana-kalan includes three satellite villages : Malak, Lohungpur and Balapur which are situated around it within a radius of one mile. In 1862, at the time of the first land settlement, this village had only Malak as its satellite. The other two have grown up during the intervening period. These newly sprung hamlets are inhabited mostly by the Ahirs. In Gohana-kalan proper, the dominant group is represented by the members of the Thakur caste, who owned most of the land in the past. The Thakurs and the Ahirs maintain a recognised mutual distance in their social relations and are proud of their caste status. Investigations are being made into the interrelationship of these satellite and main villages.

The village being quite close to Lucknow has been and is being influenced by urban contacts. A study of the effects of these contacts is being made. One research assistant is devoting himself exclusively to the study of urban inferences on rural life.

Zamindari abolition has already affected the status structure of the village. The so-called lower castes refuse to render the services they have been doing in the past. The barber, for example, refuses to draw water from the well for the Thakurs, he refuses to wash their utensils or remove the leaf plates after the dinner as in the past for considerations of fixed quantities of grains at each harvest. The Chamar refuses to work *begar* for the higher castes. All these factors have disturbed the symbiotic relationship between the various castes in the village. The prestige structure of the village is also undergoing drastic reorientation. The changes in attitudes and the rearrangement of the pattern of rural life are being studied through planned observation and by competent questionnaires. Special attention is being paid to the aspirations of the villagers and their own efforts to improve their socio-economic condition. Suggestions in this sphere by the people themselves are being discussed with them and efforts are being made to assess their attitude towards innovations introduced through contacts. This aspect of the inquiry is likely to throw sufficient light on the problem of 'eliciting the villagers' cooperation' in the social reconstruction schemes. The Gohana-kalan project is likely to run for three years.

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We are reproducing *without Comment*, from Verrier Elwin (formerly, Rev. Father Elwin), a letter to the editors of *Vanyajati* (Vol. 2, No. 2), a bilingual journal dealing with tribal customs and institutions. Elwin writes as follows : "I have frequently made it clear that my views on tribal problem are entirely different now to what they were

during the days of the British Raj. The coming of *our* (Italics ours) own Government has completely altered the position, and it is as I venture to think, a little unfair to use statements which applied to a different situation to discredit me today. I am, I may add, vehemently in favour of opening communications in the tribal areas. But I think that such roads should be made in the interests of the tribals and not for the benefit of those who would exploit them from the explains."

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The following announcement regarding the activities of Government anthropologists in India has been made through the Press Organisation, NAFEN, on May 31, 1954.

"Investigations are being carried out by Union Government anthropologists on the heredity of the aboriginal tribes in Tipperah, Garo and Khasi Hills of Assam.

Similar investigations were recently conducted in the Wynaad Taluq of Malabar. Bodily measurements of the Paniyan tribes inhabiting the area and details of other features like the colour of the pupil of the eye and the skin, and the size of the hair were taken.

The Paniyan tribes are indentured agricultural labourers. In the olden days they were slaves of the landowners who used to sell them along with their lands. The conditions of these tribesmen have not very much improved even now.

Gramophone records of tribal music are being prepared for preservation. The Madras Government Museum has a collection of about 100 records of the music of the Savaras of Ganjam and Orissa and the Todas and Kurumbas of the Nilgiris and also of the other hill tribes of South India.

Another interesting study now undertaken by the anthropologists will determine the vitamin contents of "Aoong" a beverage of the Abor Hill tribesmen. A detailed study of their language is also being made.

Besides these, they are collecting data pertaining to the growth and maturity of the Indian children in Barisha and Sarisuna of the 24-Parganas District of West Bengal.

Bones collected during excavations from Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Brahmagiri are being chemically treated and reconstructed to study the race of these prehistoric men".



# THE MEN'S HOUSE IN WESTERN PAKISTAN

JOHN J. HONIGMANN

## I

Buildings occupied or used primarily by men have an extensive distribution around the world. According to Hoebel<sup>1</sup> similar facilities for women remain far less developed, primarily because family demands leave women little freedom compared to men, and because in many communities the importance of males is emphasized. Such emphasis on males is congenial to, and maintained by, activities, like rituals, that occur in men's houses.

Roughly speaking, such houses fall into two classes. In the first group are those structures that serve for routine activities, including over-night use as sleeping places by village bachelors and guests. In the second class are so-called "club houses" primarily associated with special functions, like the performance of large-scale ceremonies, storage of ritual paraphernalia, meetings of sodalities, and esoteric instruction. Actually, the latter buildings seem to occupy one end of a continuum and in a particular instance it may be difficult to know where to classify a community's men's house. The distinction rests on an increasing number of uses, mainly ceremonial in character, characterizing the "club house" versus the "dormitory." Often enough both types are combined in cases like the kashim of the Athapaskan-speaking Indians of western Alaska.<sup>2</sup> This village structure among the Ingalik Indians, for example, serves as a place to hold midwinter ceremonies that are quite elaborately staged and may be seen by women. Young men and adolescent boys sleep in the kashim during summer as well as winter and sometimes married men spend time there in summer, for it is said to be a cool place and gives relief from mosquitoes. Women bring meals to their husbands and sons in the kashim. The kiva of southwestern Pueblo tribes in the United States is also primarily a ceremonial center affiliated with a particular ceremonial group within the village. Here too men on occasion sleep<sup>3</sup>.

In the societies that anthropologists most often study—small scale, isolated groups with little trade or occupational division of

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<sup>1</sup> Hoebel, E. A., *Man in the Primitive World* (New York, 1949), p. 303. A fairly thorough survey of men's and women's houses, especially those which are primarily used as "village dormitories," will be found in Elwin, Verrier, *The Muria and Their Ghotul* (Calcutta, Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 269-320.

<sup>2</sup> Osgood, Cornelius, *Ingalik Material Culture* (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 22, New Haven, 1949), pp. 290-302.

<sup>3</sup> Simmons, Leo W. *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1942).



labor—men's houses tend to be communal property or else belong to clan or some other section of the village. In the Middle East, however, the men's house reveals a different pattern. Here a part of the dwelling or tent, provided with a separate entrance, is sometimes set aside for the use of men<sup>4</sup>. Such provision, allowing a man to entertain his guests, may be a function of the custom of purdah. In Turkey

"Many of the wealthier households contain, besides family living-rooms, store-rooms, and stables, a further room which is usually called a guest-room; but since it is unlike anything we have in our society, I shall use the Turkish word 'oda' (Plural 'odalar') as the villagers use. The 'oda' is, in fact, a male club and sitting-room, used not only for male guests, but also for gatherings of male neighbours and kinsmen. The oda contains built-in divans, covered with rugs, usually running parallel from the door at one end to the hearth at the other..... In the middle of winter, men spend the whole day there. [ In one village of 100 households and 640 persons ] eight or so oda were in use during my stay, apart from a few which were used only by members of the household, and one or two which were not used at all because the owners could not afford fuel."<sup>5</sup>

A similar, essentially dormitory-type men's house is found in western Pakistan.

## II

The following account of men's houses is based upon facts collected in 1952 during six weeks residence in each of three villages in Sind Punjab, and Northwest Frontier Provinces. In all of these places the major activity of the people is agriculture, practiced with the aid of some type of irrigation. Dwellings are mainly of mud brick, although wealthier folk live in relatively elaborate burnt-brick structures. Nearly everywhere the dwelling place is surrounded by a mud-brick wall, often 7 or 8 feet high. Beyond the wall's gate one does not pass without a specific invitation. No grown boy (say 8 or 9 years old) nor adult male may enter the courtyard unless the women have first been warned and given an opportunity to secrete themselves in a room of the house, from whence they may peer out at the stranger. In religion the people of each community are Muslims of the Sunni sect. The men's house pattern will now be

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Leach, E. R., *Social and Economic Organisation of the Rowanduz Kurds* (Monographs on Social Anthropology, no. 3, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 1940), pp. 28-32.

<sup>5</sup> Stirling, Paul, Social Ranking in a Turkish Village (*British Journal of Sociology*, 1953, Vol. 4, pp. 31-44).

described for each village following which certain generalizations applicable to the country as a whole will be attempted.

1. Chiho represents a small landlord-dominated village of 560 persons in Nawabshah district, Sind. Most of the land is concentrated in the hands of three or four landholders, two of whom possess around 800 acres each. Any man in the community who can afford the labor and entertains enough guests to warrant the expense may build an otak outside or near the walls of his courtyard. This structure consists typically of one or more rooms with several windows closed by wooden shutters. The rooms open on a verandah or terrace which, in turn, are surrounded by a wall significantly low in comparison to the wall of the family courtyard. In cold weather the sunny terrace constitutes a far more comfortable place to sit than does the dim interior of the building. However, during the hot season, the interior remains quite cool. One large otak stretched nearly 40 feet in length and was 18 feet wide (the average house in Sind is 20 by 16 feet<sup>6</sup>). The terrace measured about the same dimensions. In the center of the building's thatched roof hung a fan or punkah, operated by a servant who sat on the ground as he worked. The room contained an almirah as well as chairs and small tables for the use of men in the household and distinguished guests. Less prestigious visitors sat on netted cots (charpoys). A more modest otak holds only cots. The otak may also contain pots of water and glasses for drinking as well as a spouted metal ore which the man uses to wash when he goes to eliminate. A wealthy man will have one servant whose exclusive province is the otak and its guests. We are unable to say precisely how many of the 58 Sindhi households in the village contained a men's house but estimate that the village contained about a dozen such structures.

In the otak a landlord reads, hears reports from tenant overseers, or, if he is a vadero (a man of great power), hears legal cases that his tenants or even the district magistrate refer to his judgment. Occasionally singers are invited to entertain on the terrace and then men of the village come around to listen, as they also sometimes listen to the landlord's radio when it is brought out of the residence to the otak. Wandering minstrels and conjurers make for the otak, where they are brought food from the kitchen, which is attached to the residence. Overnight visitors are similarly fed by the host and provided with beds. Travellers in western Pakistan always provide their own bedrolls. Two landlords, in addition to maintaining village otaks in Chiho, also own "bungalows" in the nearby railway town of Padidan. One of these buildings contained three rooms,

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<sup>6</sup> *Dawn* (Karachi), November 13, 1952.



was furnished with western furniture, and possessed a kitchen where food could be prepared for the landlord and his guests.

More or less elaborate rules of etiquette govern behavior in a landlord's men's house. Chairs are reserved for distinguished guests, being placed so that the host faces his visitors. Servants and other visitors of low rank remain silent outside of the eminent circle. Courtesy demands that guests and servants rise when a *vadero* of high rank enters the terrace or building. In return a guest of rank is escorted to the door or terrace where the host speaks farewell and from whence he despatches the *otak* servant to accompany the visitor part of the way home.

2. The village that we studied in the Thal desert of western Punjab Province is somewhat a typical in that it represents a canal colony housing Muslim refugees from East Punjab. Located in Shahpur District, near Mithatiwana, Chak 41 MB accommodates a permanent group of 377 persons<sup>7</sup>. Each agricultural family owns a minimum of 15 acres of land and no large landholders exist. The *lambardar*'s holding is above average, but in return he has the duty of providing meals for officials who call at the village. Rural Punjab is noted for the fact that unlike in Sind or the Northwest Frontier women of agricultural and artisan families do not observe rigorous seclusion. Related to this are the facts that in the Chak houses are not surrounded by high walls and women remain freely in evidence. Nevertheless, unrelated men will not interact freely with women who, in turn, observe similar, modest reticence with men. Each courtyard accommodates several families, each of which lives in its own dwelling, in front of which is a terrace surrounded by a low wall. The courtyards also contain the dairy and plowing animals and serve many of the functions that we will see are associated with the men's house or adjacent group in the North West Frontier Province. In one or two courtyards of Chak 41 MB villagers erected an unwallled structure roofed with thatch. This serves as a *batok* or men's house.

The *lambardar* maintains a two-room *batok* about a hundred feet from one end of the village, which is built of mud brick and covered by a thatched roof. Containing chairs, two tables, window, *charpoy*, fireplace, and shuttered window, one whitewashed room of the structure accommodates overnight, official visitors. Here the *lambardar* or his aid, the *chokidar*, brings meals from the former's residence. In the second room, which is provided with the familiar netted cots, less distinguished guests stay. A widowed farmer whose parents and siblings lived in the village slept here all during our stay in the Chak. So did our Christian sweeper.

<sup>7</sup> For a fuller description of this village see Honigmann, John J., *Relocation of a Punjab Pakistan Community* (*Middle East Journal*, in press).

During the day men passing to and from the fields may stop at the batok or the open place outside, where cots are moved in cooler weather. The barber comes here to shave his clients and so does the patwari, who completes his records while sitting cross-legged on one of the cots. At night the patwari sleeps in the batok. Sometimes youths visit the lambardar's batok in the evening to sing, gossip, or play cards. A hookah circulates freely from mouth to mouth (omitting the sweeper), fresh coals being provided from a fire of cornstalks that somebody ignites outside. The batok stands near the kutca road leading across the desert, to connect with a metalled highway. This location invites travellers from other chaks or from a relatively nearby desert village to stop off at the structure for a rest or drink of water. The writer, during his stay in the village, used one room of the batok. The location proved to be an advantageous one in which to learn about village affairs.

3. Tordher, located in Mardan District, North West Frontier Province, contains about 8,000 persons, most of them Pushto-speaking. The village actually represents a much-frequented market town, most of whose inhabitants are nevertheless concerned with agriculture. Landholdings are relatively small compared to Chiho, Sind, and few, if any, men own as many as 100 acres. The Sindhi pattern of carefully secluded houses, high-walled courtyards, and closed gates prevails. Outside of the courtyard walls men of means maintain a men's house, which is here called the hudzra.\*

We learned that the term hudzra is not properly used for the men's house. It rather applies to the open place reserved for men located outside of the men's building. However, it is not only freely applied to the enclosed house itself, but also to an open shade under which men gather to avoid the sun. Both these structures are provided with thatched roofs. In Tordher, too, weather determines whether men will sit in the open or closed hudzra. Unmarried youths past puberty move out of the family dwelling to sleep under one or the other buildings. In winter, of course, they move into the fully enclosed hudzra. Here they are often joined by adult married men from neighbouring houses who find the season too chill to sleep in open courtyards and whose dwellings are too small and crowded to admit additional cots.

Informants distinguished two types of fully enclosed hudzras—the "old-fashioned" and the "modern." The "old-fashioned" men's house has a dirt floor, small windows closed with wooden shutters, and a thatched roof. A relatively standard building of this size that we visited measured 40 by 24 feet. The walls are adorned by old illustrated calendars and perhaps by painted religious legends.

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\* Due to printing difficulty the diacritical mark — was used instead of ^ over "z".



Cots constitute the only furniture of the single room. We visited one such structure provided with a punkah, but our informant termed this facility to have become passé. The "modern" hudzra, which is also referred to as a "drawing room" (dchodai or batok—is the latter Urdu?), consists of a single room attached to the main house but with an entrance from outside the family courtyard. Rugs and chairs distinguish this room. Such a structure is apparently mainly used for entertaining guests. The height of fashion appears in the flat-roofed, concrete "bungalows" owned by two influential men of the village who also possess men's houses of the older type. The bungalows reflect the European architecture of north Indian public buildings and cantonment residences. A veranda, shaded by an overlapping roof supported by pillars, provides a place to sit in mild, pleasant weather. In the evening of hot days the chairs are moved down the steps into a garden where cots for sleeping are also set up. The several rooms of the bungalow accommodate cots in winter and there is even a room for bathing or to contain a commode. Solid roof, glass-paned French windows, European furniture, deep rugs and (since two years or so) electric light, complete the picture. While "every kind of people" use the ordinary hudzra, an owner places his bungalow at the disposal of deep friends and distinguished guests, like a sub-inspector of police. Meals are brought from the kitchen belonging to the residence. Unlike the old-fashioned hudzra, a bungalow is not used as a sleeping place for grown sons or neighbors. It is notable that we did not hear the term, hudzra, applied to the bungalow. Actually a continuum exists between the single-room, dim, old type men's house and the modern bungalow.

In the hudzra (*i.e.*, open shade or old type building or its adjacent ground) a host plays cards or chats with friends, hears reports from tenant overseers, and is shaved by his barber. Musicians may perform in the hudzra and the place provides a meeting-place for neighbors, who are often relatives. A man generally frequents only the men's house in his own part of town. Formerly a man of influence adjudicated disputes in the hudzra. Police officials still hear complaints in the hudzra of one of the three village lambardars. For about three days following a death in the household men gather in the bereaved family's hudzra to sit, pray, and give comfort. Respect to seniority is expressed in the same ritual of standing that we observed in Sind. In Tordher, too, a distinguished guest is escorted to the street when he takes leave. Rank differences in Tordher are less extreme than in Sind, and the associated rites of deference are also less pronounced.

A public ground (medan or daga) without any overhead shelter is found at a number of places of this large village. Such place is

referred to as a "public hudzra," serving mourning and wedding parties who visit the neighbourhood and also accommodating local men. Cots are apparently moved to the daga from homes as required.

### III

Generalizing from these three villages, the men's house in western Pakistan has the following overlapping characteristics and uses :

1. Judging from their size and construction, men's houses often consume a considerable proportion of wealth and energy. On the other hand, we saw no instance where elaboration of the men's house proceeded further than, or at the expense of, the family dwelling. As a matter of fact, a solid roof is more frequently seen on a wealthy man's residence than on his men's house, the roof of which is often merely thatched. Generally speaking, men's house and residence keep with each other in degree of elaboration. The landlords in Sind who have the most expensive houses also have the largest and best furnished otaks and maintain town bungalows. Bungalows are also associated with the wealthy men of North West Frontier Province.

2. The men's house serves as a place for accommodating guests. Commercial hotels, inns, and dak bungalows are lacking outside of large towns, although village mosques are always available to friendless travellers. Residences, of course, are closed to anyone but relatives. Even male relatives, however, sleep in the men's house rather than in the family dwelling. Generally it is the person who controls the men's house who provides the guest with food—the village lambardar in the Punjab village or the more personal hosts elsewhere. Naturally such privileges are limited by a well understood code of etiquette. After a few days an unwelcome guest who does not depart of his own accord may learn in rather direct fashion that it is time for him to leave. Ideally, however, unstinted generosity and hospitality are ideals found in all parts of Pakistan. Public officials who visit a village containing several men's houses appear to select a host with more modern furnishings or whose accommodations are otherwise more desirable. A man thus acquires influence with officials through his men's house.

3. To some extent the men's house serves as a man's retreat and office. Crowded houses, quarreling women, and other distractions can be avoided in the otak or hudzra by a man whose time is not occupied in field work. In a community that emphasizes the importance normally attached to males, women and children may no less be relieved when the husband or brother goes out of the house. In association with purdah some such facility serves to facilitate interaction of males. A landlord could not talk to his tenants nor could



he meet his non-kin friends in the household. Only with inconvenience to the women could he receive strangers in the courtyard. Purdah is a matter of degree. Our data suggest that where purdah is slight, as in Punjab Province, the functions of the men's house also become more attenuated.

4. The men's house is associated with recreation. Note that the owner of a radio may bring it to the building for neighbors to enjoy. Not all villagers in this land of double harvests, where winter brings nearly as much work as summer, have equal opportunity to enjoy recreational activities in the men's house. Men of means, like the landlords, use the otak or hudzra most conspicuously for leisure time activities. For others, too, the otak and batok provide opportunities to relieve the humdrum round of existence. In an urban setting the greater number of people and commercialization enable such opportunities to become considerably more abundant.

5. Men's houses not only provide a means for extending personal influence, but also serve as symbols of rank. Men are proud of the accommodations they can bestow on guests and of the possessions that reflect their wealth in the village.

6. Administrative acts affecting the village are carried on in the men's house both by local and visiting officials. Villages are too small to require bureaucratic staffs nor are separate judicial courts or clerical offices needed. In their place the men's house provides an equivalent facility.

A limited number of these features are also associated with the public hudzra which exists in densely populated Tordher village. This public ground, however, in its form if not its function, appears to be analogous to an urban park. Functionally, however, the daga possesses a resemblance to the true men's house described throughout this paper.

# THE HISTORY OF MAIZE IN AFRICA

M. D. W. JEFFREYS

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction of maize into Africa is usually credited to the Portuguese. On the other hand I can produce evidence for the occurrence of maize in Africa that completely nullifies this claim. I have, in *Scientia*<sup>1</sup>, given evidence that the Arabs had reached the Americas long before Columbus was born and had returned to Africa bringing *manihot* and *maize* with them. I shall now briefly show that maize was known :—

- (a) in West Africa before 1150 A.D. :
- (b) in East Africa as having been introduced there by the Arabs :
- (c) in the Indian Ocean before Vasco da Gama arrived there in 1498 :
- (d) in Rhodesia before the arrival of the Portuguese.

I accept the American origin of maize and the African origin of sorghum. Sorghum was well known in the Old World long before the introduction of maize. The Portuguese name for sorghum is *magorca* : the Italian is *surgo* : the Arabic is *dourah*. Consequently these long established names for sorghum could not lead to confusing sorghum with any other grain. With names for sorghum long in use there is no occasion to invent or create new names for an old established crop.

These names, as names for sorghum, have persisted in unbroken use to the present day. The appearance of a new grain in the old established sorghum areas would not lead to the new grain being called sorghum but to it being called often "the sorghum of X", where "X" is the country whence the new grain appears to have come. Similarly the appearance of maize as a new grain in countries where wheat or barley is grown to the exclusion of sorghum, is not confounded with wheat or barley but is often called the wheat or barley of "X".

The enquiry will centre on the names for maize in use at various times by various people. Consulting standard dictionaries of to-day one finds the following terms used for maize. *Great millet* English : *Milho grosso*, Portuguese : *gros Millet*, French : *Milho grande*, Italian : *Turkie cornes*, English : *Turks Koren*, Holland : *trigo de Turquia*, Spanish : *grano Turco*, Italian : *Guinea wheat*, English : *milho de Guinea*, Brazilian : *blé de Guine*, French : *Indian corn*, English : *ble de l'Inde*, French : *grano de'India*, Italian. There are many other names for maize but finally for the purpose of this investi-



tion there are two old Portuguese names for maize, namely *milho* and *zaburro*, both are in current use for maize.

The method that I shall adopt in this investigation will be to start from the known, that is to say from the maize names known to be in use to-day, or recently and to see how far back in time it is possible to trace such a name as being in continuous use for maize.

I am well aware that Francis Bacon wrote: "If a man will begin with certainties he shall end in doubts: but if he will be content to begin with doubts he shall end in certainties." Nevertheless the doubts only arise when the certainties end and all that I am concerned with is the certainty that for instance *milho grosso* is to-day a name for maize and was also the name for maize in 1150 A.D.

### MAIZE IN SPAIN

Bonafous writes: ".... maize was said by Santa Rosa de Vitebo to have been brought by Arabs into Spain in the 13th century." Such a statement could account for the early use in Spain of the name *Trigo de Turquia*, as a name for maize. There is other evidence to support Vitebo's statement but as it refers to maize in Europe I shall not discuss it here. The next earliest evidence that maize reached Spain is supplied by Peter Martyr. Writing to Cardinal Sforza he says: "My messenger will also deliver to Your Excellency some of those black and white seeds out of which they make bread.... From the Court of Spain, the third day of the Calends of May 1494"<sup>2</sup>.

This statement comprises the earliest known reference to the export of maize from the West Indies to Spain. Columbus was still in the West Indies on his first voyage. He had sent back twelve caravels and these brought this maize. Some maize is blue-black and I have myself seen such cobs.

If now it is assumed that Peter Martyr's account records the first introduction of maize into the Old World, then any crop grown from it would be grown in Spain, not in Portugal. The Spaniards at this time were, by a Papal Bull, forbidden the coasts of Africa, just as the Portuguese were forbidden the North Americas. This Bull was an attempt to ease the tension between the two kingdoms and to prevent occasion for war. How then were the Portuguese to become possessed of this new grain so that they could distribute it to the African Negroes? Let it be assumed that the Portuguese became acquainted with maize via Spain in 1496. The first crop would be reaped in the autumn in 1497, far too late for the Portuguese to acquire a sufficient quantity of this grain for them to hand it to the Guinea Negroes among whom, as I shall show, maize had become

an export crop before 1502. Some of these Negroes claim that maize had reached them long before and from the north east.

### MAIZE IN WEST AFRICA

Bosman who was a Hollander on the coasts of Guinea *circa* 1690 wrote: "The large Milho is by most taken to be the *Turkish wheat*, which is so well known in Holland that it is not worth while to describe it." Sebald de Wert another Hollander arrived in 1598 at the Island of Brave on the African coast opposite the Cape Verde Islands. On this island he found a storehouse full of *Turkey wheat*.<sup>5</sup>

A Dutch name for maize is *Turks koren*. This name will turn up farther on when discussing maize at the Cape. There Van Reibeeck, also a Hollander refers in 1658 to *mily* or *Trukish wheat*, as the name for the grain brought thither from Guinea by the ship, *Hasselt*<sup>6</sup>. Harcourt writing in 1613 of his visit to Guiana, in the West Indies says: "There is a kind of great wheat, called Maix, of some it is called Guinea wheat."<sup>7</sup> The translation of the travels of the Frenchman Nicholas Nicholoy Daulphinais who visited Tripoli (Africa) about 1551 has the following passage: "Instead of corn they sow Maith which is a kind of gross Mill."<sup>8</sup>

Leo Africanus, an Arab from Spain and trained in the Law at Fez in Morocco travelled in the years 1513-1517 to Timbucto, Bornu and Constantinople. He would thus be aware of *Sorghum* of which the Arab name is *dourah*. In 1526 he published his travels in Rome. These were reproduced by Ramusio in 1554 in Venice. Leo's account of the kingdom of Gualata in the western Sudan runs as follows: "... and nasce ni questo paese poco grano: and questo e miglio, and una altra sorte di grano tendo and bianco cece che non se ne vede nell' Europa."<sup>9</sup>

Moore's translation in 1738 of the word *miglio* is *Indian corn*,<sup>10</sup> *maize*, with which translation I agree. What is wanted is what Leo Africanus meant by the word *miglio*. He could not have meant *Sorghum* because the Italian word is *Surgo* and the Arabic word is *dourah*. Africanus concluded his travels in 1517. In 1519 Pigafetta, an Italian, left Italy to travel round the world with Magellan. That same year Pigafetta was off the coast of Brazil where maize, being an American plant, was a staple crop of the local Indians. Pigafetta made a collection of words used by these Verzin Indians and among these words is the Indian word *maiz* which Pigafetta translates as "Al miglio."<sup>11</sup> One concludes then that Moore's translation in 1738 of Leo Africanus' word, *miglio*, as maize is quite correct. Confirmation of this conclusion comes from the Portuguese, Valentin Fernandez. According to Cenival and Monod, Fernandez had compiled in Portugal by 1507, a description of the coast of Africa

from Ceuta to Senegal. In it he describes the territory where the villages of Oulili and Tinigui are situated, namely 20° N. Lat. by 12° W. Long., that is to say far inland from the sea. Among the crops grown there are: "...trigo, cenada e milho de Guynee."<sup>12</sup> So here is a second and quite independent observer in the same decade reporting, in roughly the same geographical area, the presence of maize as a negro crop some three hundred miles inland from the sea. Fernandez elsewhere refers to *milho dos Negres* but *milho negro* is also a Portuguese word for maize. There is thus conclusive evidence that maize was growing in the basin of the Niger before 1507, far too early for it to have reached such regions if it had been introduced to the African coast by the Portuguese. In connection with the establishment of maize as a crop in West Africa before the possibility of the Portuguese bringing it there the description of this same area by Idrisi, the Arab geographer, who wrote his geography in Arabic at Rome about 1150 A.D. is illuminating. As I am unable to consult the original I quote from Moore's translation made in 1738. "Their (the Negroes') diet at Sulla and Tocrur is a kind of larger grained millet,\* fish and preparations of milk.... \*Footnote, Indian corn... The Nile (*i.e.*, Senegal) washes that country (Segelmassa) from east to west and there on the banks of it Indian corn grows.... The plenty of corn, nor other sorts of grain, is not so great among them (Negroes) as the large grained millet from which they make their drink.... These (Negroes near Kanem, Lake Tshad)....eat large grained millet...."<sup>13</sup>

The Yoruba in Southern Nigeria have a tradition which unwittingly supports the contention that the large grained millet which Idrisi described in 1150 as being cultivated round Lake Tchad was maize. The Yoruba state that maize reached them from the north east<sup>14</sup> long before any Europeans had made contact with them. The Yoruba historian, Moore (alias Ajisafe) writes that the Kesi people were the first Yoruba to cultivate maize and that their king, Ojoko, decreed that no maize was to be sold to surrounding tribes unless it had first been killed for planting by being soaked in warm water and then dried in the sun.<sup>15</sup> Babalola, another Yoruba, writes that the early centre for the distribution of maize among the Yoruba was their ancient capital Ile Ife.<sup>16</sup> Burns states that during the reign of the fourth Yoruba king the capital was moved to Oyo.<sup>17</sup> Talbot states that between 600 and 1000 A.D. a wave of immigrants from the east invaded the Yoruba and made Ile Ife their capital but later moved to old Oyo.<sup>18</sup>

If now one takes the latest date for this invasion, say 1000 A.D. and that Old Oyo was founded *circa* 1100 A.D., then it would appear that somewhere about this time maize appeared among the Yoruba. No dating much closer than this is at present possible but what is



quite clear is that the dates of the reigns of the Yoruba kings when maize first appeared among the Yoruba far precedes the arrival of the first Europeans on the coast or the birth of Columbus.

The Yoruba tradition of the arrival of maize from the north east is supported by the fact that, in Nigeria for instance, as one progresses inland from the coast one finds that the tribal names for maize indicate the routes by which it arrived. Thus the name for maize in, say tribe A is the 'Sorghum of tribe X', where X is found to be the name of a tribe east or north of the receiving tribe A. Thus Meek writing of the Hegi tribe who lie to the west of the Kanuri says: "Among the Hegi...their word for maize is 'the Guinea-corn' of the Kanuri."...<sup>19</sup>

The Yoruba tradition that maize reached them from the north east receives confirmation when one considers the Hausa name for maize which is *masara*, and the evidence of Barth who on the Logon river in 1852 on the eastern borders of Hausaland saw: "...rich crops of Egyptian corn or masr (*Zea mais*)."<sup>20</sup> Furthermore the Bornu name for maize is according to Meek *masar*.<sup>21</sup> Now *masr* is but the Ababic word for east, and this word *masr* is often used in these regions for Egypt.

Soares de Sousa writing in 1587 of the crops grown in Brazil says: "Dà-se outro mantimento, em todo o Brazil, natural de mesma tena, a qui os indios chamam ubatim, qué é o milho de Guiné, que em Portugal chaman zaburro."<sup>22</sup> Now *milho de Guiné*, is still, as it was then, the name in Brazil for maize, while *ubatim*, which Weiner says should be *ubati* is an Indian word for maize. So there is no room for doubt as to what grain is meant by the word *zaburro*.

Blake in his translation of anonymous Portuguese Pilot's sailing instructions compiled about 1540 says of the Cape Verde Islands: "At the beginning of August they begin to sow grain, which they call *zaburro* or in the West Indies *mehiz* (maize). It is like chick pea, and grows all over these islands and all along the African coast, and is the chief food of the people." Now there can be no mistake here that *zaburro* is maize and the fact that maize is described as the main food then, as it is now, of the Negroes along the West African coasts supports the Yoruba tradition. Maize could not, if introduced by the Portuguese, have become in so short a time, a main food crop of the Negro.

De Barros who was on the Guinea coast from 1522 to 1532 in describing the Gambia says: "To grow varieties of millet—which we call *zaburro*,—the general food of these people—they clear the silt left by the floods, then scatter the seeds without further tillage, and cover them with a thin layer of sand.... They do not grow wheat or the other seeds we use...."<sup>24</sup>

However, the Portuguese offer more conclusive evidence that maize was already an established crop of the Negroes before they came. Valentim Fernandez between 1506 and 1510 wrote a description of the coasts of Guinea and of the island of Sam Tomé, he says: "*Milho zaburro* flourishes here: only in 1502 was it sown; for before that it was always brought by boat from Guinea." If the introduction of maize to West Africa were due to the Portuguese, Fernandez could not be describing an import trade in maize from the coasts of Guinea to San Tomé in and before 1502. His statement that before 1502 San Tomé imported maize from Guinea again supports the Yoruba tradition that maize was being cultivated there long before the arrival of the Portuguese. In none of these accounts of the occurrence of maize in West Africa is there any indication or claim that maize was introduced by the Portuguese. Even Fernandez does not make any claim that maize in Africa owed its introduction there to the Portuguese. He accepts without comment the occurrence of maize simultaneously in Africa and in America. There is evidence that the Portuguese introduced maize into Angola, but to deal with that will unduly lengthen this article.

#### MAIZE IN EAST AFRICA

Of maize in East Africa Werner writes: "The Anyanja would seem to have obtained it from the Yaos, and the Yaos from the coast, if we may judge of the etymology of the name—in both languages, *chimanga*—*manga* being the name for the coast."<sup>26</sup> Among the south Nyasaland languages the name for maize is "the Sorghoum of Manga" but of Manga, Wright remarks: "Now there is no doubt that the people who brought maize to the Nyasa area were Arab slavers of the coast. This community is still to-day often known as Manga which the *Swahili Standard Dictionary* gives as a name for Arabia, especially for the region of Muscat in the Persian Gulf."<sup>27</sup>

Here, inland from the sea, whence this grain reached this part of Africa, the name for maize is *Chimanga*. On the coast where Swahili is the *lingua franca* the name for maize is *muhindi*<sup>28</sup> or the grain of India. It is quite clear that both these names were at one time in use on the coast, and that *chimanga* as a name for maize was supplanted by *muhindi*. In other words *chimanga* is the earlier name, because, had *muhindi* arrived first, it, and not *chimanga*, would be the name for maize in the interior. This argument shows that maize was first introduced to the east coast by Arabs.

On proceeding to India one finds that maize is there called "the Sorghum of Mecca", i.e., *Mecca Cholam*, *Makka jouar*.<sup>29</sup> The name for maize in northern Somaliland is *Arabeki* or the grain of Arabia,

at Athens it is called Arabian corn, in Egypt *esh-er-Riff* or the corn of Morocco.

As the Portuguese had driven the Arabs off the seas by 1520 none of the names, *chimanga*, *muhindi*, or *Mecca Sorghum* would have been coined *after* the arrival of the Portuguese in India in 1498. Such names indicate that this grain was known in the Indian Ocean *before* the arrival of the Portuguese.

Confirmation of such a conclusion is provided by Duarte Barbosa who was in India from 1500 to 1516. Describing the merchandise exported from Gujerat he says: "...abundance of wheat and great millet (*milho grosso*) and many other plants with pods which do not grow in our country but here are cheap and are carried everywhere."<sup>30</sup> I have already shown that the name 'great millet' (*milho grosso*) stands for maize. It is quite clear that maize could not, in so short a time—if one accepts its Portuguese introduction into the Indian Ocean—have become an export product of Gujerat, India.

Burton writing of Mozambique before 1873 says: "Maize is locally known to the Portuguese as *Milho Burro*."<sup>31</sup> This name shows that maize was a staple crop in Southern Rhodesia in 1561. Theal reports that a Roman Catholic priest at Zimbabwe "...ate nothing, never touching meat but lived on a little *milho zaburro* cooked with herbs."<sup>32</sup> Theal in his translation of Manual de Faria's description of Monomotapa in 1569 indicates maize when he writes Indian wheat.<sup>33</sup> "This country bears rice and what we call Indian wheat..." (I have not been able to check this translation, *Indian wheat* with the original).

#### MAIZE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Brown gives *semaka* as the name for maize among the Tswana.<sup>34</sup> Mr. Cole, lecturer in Bantu languages, Witwatersrand University, states he has never heard the term used, and local informants do not recognise it. He states, however, that this word conforms with the Bantu root *-manga*, cf. Nyanja *simanga* for maize, and reports that Mr. A. T. Johnston has heard *simanga* used by some non-Tswana people in Ngamiland. Sir Harry Johnston gives *kimanga* as the Gaza name for maize.<sup>35</sup> Whether one connects *semaka* with Mecca or Managa is of little moment to my purpose which is to provide evidence for the Arab introduction of maize into Africa. These words for maize among the Southern Bantu are a clear indication that maize and its name reached them from the North. None of these names suggests that the Portuguese introduced maize.

Bryant concludes that maize reached the Zulu from the north because the Zulu name for maize is *umbila* which word is from the



same root as *mapira*, the name for maize further north in East Africa. He assigns 1750 as the date when the Zulu first received maize,<sup>36</sup> but there is clear evidence that maize was in use among the Zulu a hundred and thirty years earlier.

One is now faced with the European names for maize in South Africa. In South Africa the name for *maize* is in English *mealies* and in Afrikans, *mielies*. It is quite clear that both derive from a common root and do not derive from the English name *Sarazin wheat* nor from the Holland, *Turks koren*. A Portuguese name for maize is *milho* and Burt-Davy writes: "...mielie being undoubtedly a corruption of the Portuguese word *milho* meaning grain."<sup>37</sup> The point now to ascertain is how far back in South Africa can this type of name for maize be traced? In 1855 the word was in use.<sup>38</sup> Under the form *melis* (Indian corn) it occurs in 1801.<sup>39</sup>

Moodie writes that Van Reibeeck in 1658<sup>40</sup> referred to maize as *mily* or Turkey wheat which had been brought from Guinea by the ship Hasselt. Now the Dutch under Van Riebeeck had landed at the Cape for the first time in 1652, six years earlier. Prior to that the Dutch name for maize was, and still is *Turks koren*, a name, as I have shown, that was used by the Hollander Bosman, on the coasts of Guinea in 1690. Why then was Van Reibeeck calling *Turks koren*, *mily*? The explanation appears to lie in the fact that a Portuguese name for maize was *milho* and that as the Portuguese had been calling at, and leaving slaves at the Cape over since the days of Vasco da Gama, this name was picked up and adopted by the Dutch at the Cape as a more widely known and easier name for maize than their own *Turks koren*. This explanation agrees with Burt-Davy's claim for the origin of the South African name *mielie* for maize. As evidence for the Portuguese use of *milho* for maize in Southern Africa prior to the arrival of Van Riebeeck, Theal states that *milho* which he translates as maize was on sale at Sofala in 1638<sup>41</sup> while in Joseph de Cabreja's account of the wreck of the *Nossa Senhora de Belem* on the Natal coast in 1633 *Zea maiz* is mentioned in the Portuguese text as *mais*<sup>42</sup> and it was brought to them by the natives. In Francisco Vaz d' Almada's account of the wreck of the *Sao Joao Baptista* in 1622 he tells of *milho* not *macorca* being offered to him on his journey to Sofala.<sup>43</sup>

Theal translating the Portuguese report of the wreck of the Saint Benedict in 1553 in Durban Bay writes: "...the natives of the country brought us fish for sale that night, for it is very abundant there, and some large millet."<sup>44</sup> Tomé Pires writing *circa* 1514 mentions *milho* as among the merchandise traded in at Cambay.<sup>45</sup> Vasco da Gama provisioned his ships at Malindi on the East coast of Africa in 1498 prior to discovering India. The Moor instructed to attend to the provisioning of the ships is reported to have said that only

sheep and a grain which Vasco da Gama writes as *milho* were available.<sup>46</sup> There is thus ample evidence that from to-day, without a break to the times of Vasco da Gama the word *milho* or variations of this name have been used from Portugal to India via the Cape for a grain which I maintain was maize, alias mealies in South Africa.

The method here adopted, *pace* Francis Bacon, of starting with names of current use for maize and tracing back in time the use of these names for such a grain has not lead to uncertainties, but to the certainty that maize was cultivated in Africa long before Columbus was born. The attempts by botanists to call an African grain, *sorghum*, with long established names of its own such as *Guinea corn*, *Dourah*, *macorca*, by such strange names as *Guinea wheat*, *Turkish corn*, *milho*, *Indian corn*, *zaburro*, are rendered very dubious.

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D. G. J. R. V.

DELO

# A CASTE DISPUTE AMONG WASHERMEN OF MYSORE<sup>1</sup>

M. N. SRINIVAS

## *Part A.*

### THE DISPUTE

#### I

The dispute which I have described in the following pages, occurred among the members of the Washerman Caste (Madivāla Shetti or Agasa) in Mandya and Mysore Districts of Mysore State during the year 1946. It began formally on 20th May 1946, in Bihalli, at a wedding, when Maya of Bella, the plaintiff, charged the defendant, Shiva of Magga, with having given his niece Javni in marriage to Kala, the son of Kempī of Kotti, the sister of Arsai who was outcasted about twelve years ago for having had sexual relations with a Holeyā (Untouchable). (See Document III and the genealogical chart.)<sup>2</sup> Maya's charge needs to be explained. According to it, it was not Kempī, but her elder sister Arasi who was outcasted. The guilt extends to Kempī only by association or identification with Arasi. This is a crucial point and will be discussed later. The defendant Shiva is brought within the orbit of guilt because he gave his younger sister's daughter in marriage to Kempī's son, which again provides an instance of guilt by association. It is necessary to add here that normally it is the parents who choose a partner for their son or daughter, and as between the two parents the father's responsibility is much greater than the mother's. It is only when the father is dead or very ill that the father's or mother's relatives, especially the former, have the responsibility of finding a spouse. In the above case it has to be presumed that Shiva's sister was either a widow or a divorcée, and that her husband's brothers had no influence upon her. Perhaps she had gone to live with her brother after her husband's death, or after divorcing him. This is the only explanation for Shiva's having the power of disposal over his niece.

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<sup>1</sup> The common Kannada word for a Washerman is Agasa, which is a caste name. The more high-sounding Madivāla Shetti, is only used in the rural areas, and that too not very commonly. The term Shetti is a honorific title used at the end of either a caste or personal name by some artisan and trading castes such as Washerman, Potter or Trader. The suffix Shetti is used only on formal occasions, or in documents in respect of a trader or artisan who is considered a big man. In the present documents, the suffix, Shetti, after a personal name, is used somewhat erratically.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforward capital D will be used for Document. The English version of the documents is given in Part B.

The timing of the charge is significant. The elders of the Washerman caste from several neighbouring villages had gathered together for the wedding at Bihalli, and Maya stated his charge when the guests were about to sit for dinner. Maya was asked whether he could prove, or provide evidence (*rujuvātu*) for, his charge. He gave an undertaking in writing (*muchaliké*) that he would do so (D. III). In D. I the defendant Shiva agrees to subject himself to such punishment as the members of his caste (*kulastharu*) think fit, if Maya succeeds in proving his charge (*phiryād*) before witnesses to that document. It is reported that Shiva was made to leave the dinner pending the inquiry. This was an insult and the Bihalli hosts were annoyed with Maya for causing this unpleasantness.

D. II is a letter written by the plaintiff on 1st June 1946 to an elder in Rampura informing the latter that in accordance with the decision arrived at the wedding, a meeting of elders to adjudicate the dispute had been fixed for Tuesday, 4th June 1946 at the Mādeswaraswāmi temple in Gudi, a village about a mile from Rampura. (The time of the meeting is mentioned as ten a.m.) The plaintiff informs the Rampura elder that the responsibility for producing the defendant before the *panchayat* is his (the elder's). It is interesting to note that dates mentioned are according to the Gregorian calendar, and not the Hindu calendar which is still used for all ritual occasions.

The inquiry into the dispute began on Tuesday, 4th June 1946 at the temple<sup>1</sup> mentioned above, before a large body of assembled elders of the Washerman caste. One or two informants estimated that several hundred Washermen had gathered together on that day. Bora of Rampura, one of the hosts, had cooked 35 *seers*<sup>2</sup> of rice for his friends and supporters alone. Kempī, who was accused by Maya of having been outcasted, was made to serve food to these guests—this was a tactical move on the part of her friends, calculated to prove that everyone was having social relations with her. The existence of social relations implies that the person in question has not been outcasted.

In D. III Maya mentions both the immediate and ultimate origins of the dispute. The immediate origin was at the wedding in Bihalli, and the ultimate origin was the outcasting of Arasi, the elder sister of Kempī. Maya states that ever since Arasi's outcasting, no member of the Washerman caste had any social relations with either sister. (Social relations include inter-dining, marriage, and other relationships which normally prevail among the members of a caste.) He says that if he is proved wrong he will pay whatever

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the meeting was actually held in the shade of the sacred peepul tree by the side of the temple.

<sup>2</sup> A *seer* measure is equal to about 2½ lbs.



damages the elders think fit. He actually uses the word "damages"—it is spelt *damij* in Kannada.

D. IV is the statement of the defendant Shiva. It is written in a somewhat formal manner clearly imitative of the records of proceedings in urban courts of law—some of the participants, including Kulle Gowda of Rampura, are familiar with lawyers and law courts in the towns.

Shiva answers Maya's charge by stating that for eleven years since the outcasting of Arasi he has had no contact with either her or Kemp. But about a year and a half ago Maya himself went to Shiva and told him, "You must see that your younger sister's daughter is given in marriage to Kemp's son." Shiva replied, "I agree, as you have done me the honour of coming and asking me." Sometime later Shiva and Kemp went to Bella to obtain the advice of Maya regarding the arrangements for the wedding. Maya replied that he had no time that day and that he would come another day. He also suggested that the wedding should be held a month later. Shiva and Kemp agreed to Maya's suggestion, but when, some days later, they both went to invite Maya to the wedding, he said, "The marriage is between the bride's people and the groom's people. I have nothing to do with it. I will not come." The marriage was celebrated without Maya. Shiva added that all his relatives were continuing to have all kinds of social relations with him and Kemp.

In brief, the line of defence adopted by Shiva was to make Maya responsible for his (the former's) having social relations with Kemp. He also stated that neither he nor Kemp had been outcasted.

It was possible, however, for Shiva to adopt a different line of defence: he could have separated the charges against Arasi and Kemp, and argued that the outcasting of the former did not extend to the latter. Perhaps Shiva felt it was safer to steer clear of the career of an explosive personality like Kemp. Anyway, it was more prudent of him to have resisted any temptation to chivalry he might have had. But, as will become evident later, the charge against Arasi became separated from the charge against Kemp in spite of Maya's attempt, although not explicit, to confuse the two, and to condemn Kemp by implication.

D. V is Kemp's statement of her defence. It is evident that this has been made after witnesses for Maya had given their evidence. Kemp roundly declares that everything that has been said on behalf of Maya is false. Another statement of hers cuts the ground under Maya's feet by separating the charges against herself and her elder-sister. She states that for a long time there has been no social relationship between her and Arasi. She also states that Maya and some witnesses on his behalf, such as Elehalli Lingappa and Boodnoor Mallayya, have been having social relations with her all along.

Finally, like Shiva, she makes Maya responsible for the marriage between her son and Shiva's niece. Her version of the wedding negotiations is substantially the same as Shiva's. There are minor discrepancies no doubt, but these do not seem to have been picked on by the opposition to puncture the evidence of either Shiva or Kempí. Perhaps the discrepancies were not there in the statements but only in the record of them. But the documents must be taken, in spite of their great brevity and obvious deficiencies in draftsmanship, as giving a fairly accurate account of what happened. The great evidential value ascribed to written things in rural India ensures that what is reduced to writing in the presence of several people representing all the "parties" is essentially true. The possibility of deliberate cheating by a clever and corrupt scribe should not, however, be ruled out of consideration.

D. VI is a statement by Boodnoor Mallayya, who is described by Kempí as a "witness for Maya", but at head of D. VI as a witness for Kempí. His evidence was quite crucial as is recognized in D. XIV: it is mentioned there that it was on the strength of his evidence that the case against Shiva and Kempí fell through, and eventually, this led to Maya's being punished with a fine. Mallayya's statement was regarded by the *panchayat* as providing clear evidence that Maya was himself having social relations with Kempí, which clearly disproved his allegations that Kempí had been outcasted with her sister. Or, alternatively, if Kempí had really been outcasted, and Maya had eaten food touched by her, he himself deserved to be outcasted.

Mallayya told the *panchayat* that some time ago he and Maya had occasion to return to Bella from Bihalli *via* Kotti, Kempí's village. Maya took Mallayya to Kempí's house—this was Mallayya's first visit to her house. After a little talk, Kempí told the guests that she had some steamed cakes bought for them from the shop, and that she would make some coffee. She requested the guests to wait till the coffee was made.

When Kempí went in to make coffee, Maya and Mallayya went towards the village pond to perform ablutions. I was, however, told by some informants that during the period of Kempí's absence in the kitchen, Maya came to learn—it is not known how—that Shiva and Kempí had become lovers. This made Maya very angry indeed and he left the house at once without partaking of Kempí's hospitality.

Kempí must have suspected that something had gone wrong when she found that her guests had suddenly disappeared without telling her. But, clever woman that she was, she carried the food on her head to the two men, taking care to be accompanied by a man of the Okkaliga (peasant) caste, a different and higher one from that

of Washerman, to act, if necessary, as a witness later. Kempî's actions suggest great premeditation on her part, and but for it she would not have been able to outmanoeuvre Maya.

To Kempî's and the Okkaliga's queries as to why they had left suddenly and without informing anyone, Mallayya replied that they wanted to perform ablutions. After a while the two guests ate the food brought by Kempî in the presence of the Okkaliga. The entire incident suggests that Kempî had great knowledge of the way Maya's mind would work when he learnt of her friendship with Shiva.

Mallayya is followed by Annalli Madayya (D. VII) who begins his evidence by stating that he is Maya's (classificatory) brother. His evidence confirms Mallayya's—he says that he has been having social relations with Kempî for the past five years. He adds that he and Maya had occasionally dined together at Kempî's house. He also deposes that there was harmony between them all until the present incident. He had seen Washermen from Bihalli and other villages eating the dinner given at the wedding of Kempî's son and Shiva's niece.

A point which is worth commenting upon is that in D. XIV Mallayya's evidence is referred to, but not Annalli Madayya's, in spite of the latter's being the classificatory brother of Maya. Whether this is merely an omission, one of several, or whether Mallayya's evidence was given greater weight because of the presence of an impartial third party, *viz.* the Okkaliga companion, it is not quite clear.

D. VIII is a brief statement by one Rudra of Settalli that he had been having social relations with Kempî for the past six months and that he knows nothing else. This statement, along with Ds. VI and VII, aims to prove that Kempî was having social relations with her castefolk. From which it follows that the ban against Arasi did not extend to Kempî.

D. IX only confirms the evidence of the three earlier documents. In it Kempayya of Bella states that while everything he knows about Arasi is first-hand, what he knows about Kempî is only hearsay. He adds that he is eighty years of age. I was told by informants that Kempayya's evidence carried great weight because of his advanced age and reputation for honesty. His clear separation of direct (*record*) for hearsay (*dubāri*) evidence was also appreciated. D. XIV does not, however, contain any reference to his evidence.

Ds. X–XII are all statements by witnesses for the plaintiff, Maya. D. X is a statement by Kyatayya, an elder of the Washerman caste in Kotti, Kempî's village. He stated that sometime ago the Washerman elders of Kotti had received intelligence that Kempî had resumed social relations with her outcaste sister, Arasi, after having suspended them when the latter was expelled from caste. The elders sent for Kempî who was, according to them, in a defiant mood. She is alleged



to have told the elders that she preferred her sister to her caste. A ban was then imposed on her. Since that time no one, with the exception of Shiva, had social relations with Kempri.

Ds. XI and XII are both statements of Linga, the younger brother of Arasi's dead husband. In D. XI he provides evidence for the charge that Kempri was having social relations with her elder sister and in D. XII he gives evidence on the ultimate source of the present dispute, *viz.*, the outcasting of Arasi for having had sexual relations with an Untouchable.

Linga states that he and Arasi each occupied the partitioned half of a single house—when a partition takes place all joint family property, immovable as well as movable, is divided, and quite frequently, a single house is divided by walls into two, three or more parts. In such a case each partitioned family gets to know a great deal of what goes on in the other families. It is necessary to draw attention to the fact that Linga begins by stressing the advantages of his position for observation. He states that whenever Kempri visited Arasi, she had dinner with Arasi. He reported the matter to the *panchayat* who issued a rule (*vidhi*) to the effect that none may have social relations with Kempri. In D. XII Linga deposes that about twelve years ago he reported to the elders of his caste the fact that his elder brother's widow had sexual relations with an Untouchable. He caught the pair redhanded. The elders took a statement from Arasi before "releasing her from caste", *i.e.*, outcasting her. Since then all social relations had been suspended with Arasi.

In D. XIII a parallel cousin of Shiva gives evidence against the latter. According to him, a year ago Kempri approached the elders of the Washerman caste in Magga with a request that they should help her to secure Annalli Madayya's daughter for her son. Shiva's father reported that Kempri was having social relations with her outcaste sister, and Kempri was at once made to leave the *panchayat*. Shiva was asked whether he was having social relations with Kempri to which he replied in the affirmative.

It may be pointed out that pollution is the means by which the guilt spreads. Pollution may be described as social contagion. Whoever comes in contact with the guilty party himself becomes guilty. Marriage, sex and dining constitute contact always, and on certain occasions, having any form of social relationship is defined as contact.

D. XIII has appended to it the signatures of five Washerman elders in addition to that of Shiva. In XIII(a) they declare that they have seen certain things with their own eyes and reflected with their minds on what they have seen, and they have come to the conclusion that *both* Arasi and Kempri have been expelled from caste.

D. XIV states the verdict of the assembled Washerman elders and others. Sri Kulle Gowda of Rampura who at that time held the purely titular and high-sounding office of Village Organizer, was present as the document in question eloquently testifies. The reference to Nadugowdas who are officials of the traditional social structure in this part of Mysore State, and who come from all the high castes in the area, illustrates how the decision of a caste court is supported by officials representing the entire society. Caste cannot exist by itself—it must take note of the village and of the wider territorial units.

In D. XIV Maya is described as admitting to eating cakes and drinking coffee given by Kempī. This was witnessed by Boodnoor Mallayya. Maya was fined the traditional sum of twelve *hanas* (Rs. 2/-), and the money was paid into the temple of Mādeshwara. It is explicitly stated that the verdict was read out to the assembled elders who gave their approval. It is not, however stated in the document that Kagare Linga (Ds. XI and XII) was fined for giving false evidence (*sullu sākshi*).

## II

A few facts which I was able to collect about the dispute and some leading personalities in it may not be out of place here. It must be mentioned that these facts were collected in Rampura in 1948 and 1952, two and six years respectively, after the dispute had occurred.

Kempī has the reputation of being both a virago and a loose woman. Even while the dispute was in progress she threatened to beat Maya with sandals—a great insult indeed, involving both the aggressor and the victim in temporary loss of caste—and she said that she was prepared to spend Rs. 2,000/- on the ceremony of purification and readmission to caste (*kulashuddi*). The ceremony involves, among other things, giving a dinner to caste-folk.

Kempī's father does not seem to have had any sons. After his eldest daughter had married into Kagare village, he had his second daughter, Kempī, married in the *manevālathana* way. In this form, the son-in-law leaves his natal kin-group and joins his conjugal kin-group, and the children born of the marriage are regarded as the children of the wife's natal group. Kempī had a son by her husband, and sometime later she became mistress of Hori, a Peasant of Kotti village. Kempī's husband heard of this liaison, and he beat her. She complained to her lover who promptly took her away, and gave her shelter in the house of an Oilman (*Ganiga*). Kempī left her husband and son to join her lover. Though the two lived

together, Hori, because he belonged to a higher caste, did not eat food cooked by his mistress. He cooked his own food. Kempī had a daughter by her lover, and two or three years later, Hori died. Her husband had died earlier. She went back to her son who was about sixteen years old at that time. Maya became her lover soon after. He took an interest in the marriage of her son because she was his mistress. He, an important elder of the Washerman caste in Bella, went to Shiva, his wife's sister's husband,<sup>1</sup> and asked Shiva to see that his younger sister's daughter Javni was given in marriage to Kempī's son Kala. A little later Maya, to his chagrin, discovered that Shiva had become Kempī's lover. His annoyance when he made the discovery was so great that he refused to attend the wedding for which he was really responsible. He seems to have harboured a deep grudge against both Kempī and her lover, and this led him to try to get Shiva thrown out of caste for having social relations with Kempī, herself an outcaste—the very framing of the charge shows what a clever litigant Maya is. But unfortunately, Kempī was more than a match for him. She had already anticipated his moves and caught him in a trap. It is surprising that Maya did not take account of the evidence which Kempī had secured against him. Either he allowed his desire for vengeance to get the better of his sense of evidence, or he was confident of his ability to suppress the witnesses on Kempī's side. In either case he had overestimated his powers.

I was told that Maya had paid Rs. 100/- to the members of the Washerman's caste-*panchayat* at Hogur. I do not know whether this is different from the bribe alleged to have been given to the five members who appended their signature to D. XIII. If it is the same, it is difficult to understand some of the facts mentioned below, assuming of course that they are true.

I was told by Bora of Rampura that as a result of this dispute Keshava, the leader of the Washerman caste-*panchayat* at Hogur, was removed from his office for having accepted a bribe. (Keshava's name does not, however, occur among the five who signed D. XIII.)

Bora's reliability as an informant should not be exaggerated, but I do know this, that he is not a *person grata* with the Washerman elders of Hogur. In 1948, two years after the dispute had ended, a few days before the wedding of Bora's son<sup>2</sup> to a girl from Kolegol, the Hogur elders wrote a letter to the girl's parents saying that Bora had lost caste as a result of having eaten food cooked by Kempī (see p. 150). They advised the girl's parents not to give their daughter to Bora's son. Bora was agitated by this, and he took the documents

<sup>1</sup> This relationship is not shown in the diagram. I regret that I was not able to obtain the complete genealogies of all the parties to the dispute.

<sup>2</sup> Not own son, but adopted. His younger brother's son, really.



of the dispute to show to his would-be affines. The latter advised him that he should file a suit for defamation in a court of law against the elders of Hogur. Here is an attempt to use the legal system introduced by the British to strengthen caste mores. Not all the forces brought in by three centuries of Westernisation are hostile to caste. Some of them have even added strength to it.

### III

The subject of the dispute relates, in the last analysis, to the operation of the moral sanctions of caste. Maya tries to have Shiva outcasted because the latter has been having social relations with Kemp, whose sister had been outcasted twelve years earlier for having had sexual relations with an Untouchable. The sanction of outcasting is an extremely powerful one, especially in its more severe form which does not envisage a return to caste under any circumstances. In the milder form the offender is permitted to return after the lapse of a period, after he has performed the required expiatory rites and given the caste a dinner and paid a fine. For instance, the offence of which Arasi had been found guilty was one which would not normally permit of readmission. On the other hand, dining, not deliberate, of course, with an outcaste, would not lead to the diner's being outcasted for good. (See D. XIII).

Caste is able to exert great pressure on a member: even one who defies caste for a decade or two will go back to it when he wants to get his sons and daughters married. Kemp, after a life of defiance, approached the elders of her caste when she wanted to get her son married (D. XIII). Without the support of his caste it is not possible for a person to obtain a spouse—I am not referring here to the high-caste, Westernized groups in the cities, but to the majority of castes living in rural India.

While a woman of high caste would be outcasted for having sex relations with an Untouchable, a high caste man would not normally be thrown out of caste for having a *liaison* with an Untouchable woman. In the former case the *panchayat* would say that a mud pot defiled by a dog's touch must be thrown away, whereas in the latter they would say that a brass pot touched by a dog should not be thrown away but purified. This is only one instance of a double standard of morality prevalent all over India.

Relations between members of different castes, and frequently enough, between members of the same caste, are governed by the concept of pollution. When all the members of a sub-caste in an area are having social relations with each other, it implies that there is no pollution. When a member has been punished for an offence,

having any relation with him results in pollution. The offence itself might be nothing other than indulging in a prohibited social relationship. Strictly speaking, there is no need for a deliberate act of punishment by the caste-*panchayat*—both the wrong-doer and caste-folk consider that indulgence in a prohibited relationship results automatically in defilement. Readmission to caste occurs after the necessary expiatory rites are performed.

In this dispute the Washermen of several villages are involved. In D. III Maya challenges that he will produce evidence of Shiva's guilt before all the leaders of the various caste-*panchayats* (*ellā gadiya kulada yajamanarū*); and again in D. IV it is said that the Washermen of Mandya and Mysore Districts were present to settle the dispute. Several hundred Washermen are reported to have gathered together at the Madeshwara temple on that memorable occasion. This should provide some idea of the spread of caste ties—that for a numerically insignificant caste like the Washerman—and the strength and vigour of caste as an institution.

Representatives of other castes too were present: it is stated that Maya paid his fine before the assembled Nadugowdas. The elders of a village or region frequently belong to different castes and recognise that each sub-caste has a sphere of action in which they do not interfere unless asked to do so. On the other hand, caste and village normally support each other.

#### IV

The effective unit of caste system is not an all-India category like the Brahmin or Kshatriya, but a small local group—usually described as a sub-caste—such as the Kannada-speaking Washermen of Mysore. In the latter sense it is a small, homogeneous and well-knit group spreading over the villages of a small area. Usually the members of a caste in an area are all related either as cognates or agnates or affines. The widespread prevalence of cross-cousin marriage frequently duplicates the kind of kinship bond prevailing between persons. So when a dispute breaks out, it disturbs the existing harmony of social relations among a closely-knit body of people. Existing cleavages deepen, new ones occur, and alliances are formed between individuals and groups. In the present dispute Shiva and his father are on opposite sides. Maya's mother's sister's son, Annalli Madayya, gives evidence against Maya. Maya and Shiva are themselves related as *shadgas*, i.e., husbands of sisters. In short, the existing configuration of relationships breaks down and a new one takes time to form. In the meanwhile there is disharmony and confusion.

It is seen that caste disputes pervade the sphere of kinship. Even very intimate relationships such as father and son, brother and brother, and brother and sister, are disturbed. Kempī has to suspend her relations with her elder sister. In D. X she is reported as saying that she wanted her elder sister, not her caste-folk. Whether this is true or not, it gives an insight into the nature of the conflicts produced by a dispute in a small local group the members of which are related to each other by a variety of intimate links. A person may be called upon by his caste to sever all connection with his wife, children, parents or brothers. Usually he obeys his caste, perhaps after an unsuccessful effort at defiance. As long as marriage has to take place within caste, the caste elders hold the trumps in their hands. And the sanction of boycott in a small face-to-face community is a very powerful weapon.

## V

As has been said earlier, the procedure adopted in caste courts or *panchayats* is markedly influenced by the procedure obtaining in urban courts of law. In every village there are a few individuals who have made many pilgrimages to the law courts either on their own or on behalf of others. Some persons act as intermediaries between the town lawyers and villagers. They have a vested interest in disputes, and do not miss a chance to increase any existing differences. As is to be expected, the imitation of the procedure of the urban courts is far from perfect. In fact, not infrequently, documents carry the signature of irrelevant or wrong persons. For instance, there is no reason why D. I should carry Shiva's signature, or D. IV, Maya's. Besides, the draftsman usually contributes his own errors and oddities. In an effort to imitate the urban lawyer's language, bombastic and technical terms—often wrongly spelt—and phrases are introduced.

Where the procedure, however, differs radically from that of the urban law courts is, in the first instance, in the place where the courts meet. In ordinary disputes, any odd verandah (*jagali*) before a house will do. I have heard an elder, sitting in his verandah, sharply reminding a loose-tongued woman, party to a dispute, that she was in a *nyāya-sthāna* (place of justice, court). But when a serious dispute, involving important people and several villages, is to be settled, the meeting is usually held before a temple. Every person begins and frequently ends his statement, by a reference to his 'soul as witness' (*ātma sākshi*), of 'god as witnesses' (*Ishwara sākshi*). He says that he is making the statement on oath (*pramāna*). A false statement under these circumstances is supposed to bring on the head of the guilty person, or on a member of his family, some



disaster which is the result of divine wrath. But this does not mean that witnesses are always truthful—Kagare Linga was fined 3 *hanas* for giving false evidence. The tutoring of witnesses is quite common.

The assembly of caste-elders is referred to as *kula-swāmi* or "lord-caste". It is treated with respect bordering upon reverence. A person prostrates before it before being readmitted to caste.

Occasions such as a wedding when a number of caste-folk come together seem to be chosen for bringing a complaint formally to the attention of the caste-assembly. Maya's behaviour, described in D. III, may be said to be typical. When the wedding guests were about to sit for dinner, he announced that Shiva, himself one of the guests, had no right to be in the assembly as he was having social relations with the outcaste Kempī. And he refused to sit for dinner till Shiva was sent out of the hall. Some of the members present must have demanded evidence for what he was saying, and consequently he gave an undertaking in writing that he would prove his charge. The date and place of the meeting were agreed upon on that occasion alone.

It is probable that the case was settled in one sitting. Maya stated his charge formally (D. III) and Shiva replied to him (D. IV). As the crucial issue in this case was whether Kempī had been outcasted along with her sister, she was asked to make a statement (D. V). It is very likely that witnesses for Maya were called before witnesses for Shiva, but the statements of the latter have been recorded before those of the former. Kagare Linga made two statements (Ds. X and XI), the first one referring to Kempī's having social relations with her outcaste sister, and the second, to the ultimate source of the dispute, the outcasting of Arasi. The slightest doubt regarding the latter—or rather the failure to establish it as an indubitable legal fact—would have completely destroyed the case against Shiva. A perusal of the documents shows that the elders know what really are the crucial issues in a dispute, and they are able to proceed straight to these issues in spite of a vast mass of obtruding but irrelevant data. In the present dispute, for instance, the question is, "Is Shiva guilty or not of having had social relations with Kempī who is alleged to have been outcasted along with her sister Arasi?" The correct answer to this question involves finding out first of all whether Arasi had been thrown out of caste, secondly, whether Kempī had been expelled for having social relations with her sister, and finally, if the answer to the second question is 'yes', the further question arises, "Did Shiva have social relations with Kempī?" Arasi was no doubt outcasted, but there was no evidence to prove that her sister too had come under the ban. On the contrary, there was evidence to show that she was having social rela-

tions with the plaintiff, which proves that she was within caste. Shiva did not, therefore, commit any offence when he gave his niece in marriage to Kempî's son.

"Did such-and-such an event actually occur?" is a question frequently asked by a *panchayat*. How to establish the truth of an allegation before the *panchayat*? *Sākshi* or witness, *rujuvātu* or evidence, and *muchaliké* or written statement, are terms one constantly hears in the rural parts of Mysore. It may be stated here that the *panchayat* will not accept that a particular event occurred unless evidence is provided for it. And what is evidence? Evidence can be of several kinds, according to the degree of reliability. But all evidence has this in common—it needs a witness. The character of the witness is a highly important fact—if he is a man of straw his words will not have much evidential value. A man of substance, possessing land and money, and with a reputation for piety and integrity, will sway the judges considerably. If, in addition, he is an elder, then the opposing party will have a difficult time contravening his evidence. As mentioned earlier, my informants thought that the evidence of Kempayya, the old man from Bella, was extremely important. He was known to be a man of integrity and he was eighty years of age. He made only a very brief statement saying that he knew everything about Arasi whereas he had no direct evidence at all about Kempî. The *panchayat* distinguishes between direct and hearsay evidence. The latter does not have much value. This helps to explain why a shrewed woman like Kempî took a man of a different caste with her to witness to Maya's eating of food handled by her. The Peasant witness was not called, but Boodnoor Mallayya's statement (D. VI) was not contested by Maya.

There is also a difference between written and oral evidence. The former has more value than the latter. It is universal for joint family property to be partitioned before a few elders and the terms to be reduced to writing, but registering the deed is not so common. (That a registered deed has even greater value than a merely unregistered one is recognised by rural folk). The weight attached to documents is enormous even when the draftsman's acquaintance with the language is only elementary.

Normally the weight of evidence tells. In spite of the fact that Maya was a powerful man, and in spite of the alleged bribing of the judges, the decision was given in favour of Shiva. Maya was fined, and so was Kagare Linga—the latter for false evidence. The amounts of the fines are small, but what is important in punishment is not the financial loss inflicted but the loss of face.

Part B.

THE DOCUMENTS

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT I. The defendant agrees to abide by the decision of the caste assembly in the matter of the dispute.

DOCUMENT II. A letter written by the plaintiff informing one of the parties of the date and place of the meetings.

DOCUMENT III. Plaintiff's statement.

DOCUMENT IV. Defendant's statement.

DOCUMENT V. Kemp's statement.

DOCUMENTS VI, VII, VIII and IX are statements by witnesses for Kemp, and ultimately, for the defendant.

DOCUMENTS X, XI, XII XIII and XIII(a) are statements on behalf of Maya, the plaintiff.

DOCUMENT XIV. The court's decision.

DOCUMENT I :

Agreement entered into on 20-5-1946 at the wedding of Cheluva s/o Raja Shetti of Bihalli, Hogur Hobli, Sangama Taluk. In the presence of the witnesses who have gathered here, I, Shiva, s/o Thippa of Magga agree willingly to pay whatever fine or other punishment my caste-folk (*kulastharu*) may decide on, should the charge (*phiryād*) levelled against me by Maya s/o Bogayya of Bella, be proved true before witnesses.

Signed by : SHIVA

Witnesses : (1) Ramu

(2) Harigolu Kempa

(3) Hogur Keshava

(4) Boodnoor Mallayya

(5) Kapi Nanja

(6) Rampura Bora

(7) Annalli Madayya

(8) Bettalli Veera

(9) Maghu Kempa

(10) Bihalli Kempa

(11) Settalli Rudra

(12) Kagare Linga

Document drafted by Kuri Malla.

Notes

Washermen from fifteen villages are mentioned in the above document.

DOCUMENT II :

On 1st June 1946, Maya wrote the following letter to Puttayya of Rampura : It was decided at Bihalli to arrange a meeting of caste-folk a fortnight from 20th May. Accordingly, a meeting will



be held on Tuesday, 4th June, in Gudi near the temple of Sri Madeshwara. Please come to the meeting at 10 a.m.

Signed. MAYA

*N.B.* It is your responsibility to bring the defendant (*aparādhi*) Shiva s/o Thippa. Please bring him to the meeting at the time mentioned above.

*Notes :*

Temples are favourite places for the settlement of disputes. It is believed that people are less prone to perjury before a temple than elsewhere. Occasionally one of the parties may be asked to swear to the truth of a statement, and the settlement of a dispute is marked by *puja* being performed to the chief deity.

The Mādeshwara temple at Gudi is a favourite place for settling disputes. In this case it was also the most convenient place, situated as it is in the centre of the villages involved in the dispute.

DOCUMENT III :

[ A meeting was held on Tuesday, 4th June, 1946 ]<sup>1</sup>

Maya's statement before the meeting : I went to my brother-in-law's [Cheluva's] wedding at Bihalli on 20th May, 1946. As soon as the *dhārē* was over, I mentioned [to the guests] that "Shiva s/o Thippa of Magga has begun a relationship (*nentasthana*) with the house of Kempī of Kotti, sister of Arasi, who was outcasted for having sexual relations with an Untouchable (*holabaliké*).” I was asked to prove (*rujuvātu*) my allegation, and I agreed in writing (*muchchaliké*) to do so. I undertook to provide the evidence (*kai-phayat*) of relevant witnesses at an assembly of all the headmen of the caste-courts (*gadi*) of Madivalas to meet at the Madeshwara temple on 4th June, 1946. About twelve years ago, after the decision against Arasi had been given, no one was normally having any relation (*balike*) with either Arasi or her younger sister Kempī. Food cooked by them was not eaten, nor were they allowed to dine with caste-folk. If my statements are proved untrue, I am willing to pay such damages (*dāmiḥ*) as you think fit. I have narrated the facts as they are before caste-folk.

Sd. MAYA

*Witness :* Ramu.

*Notes :*

1) *Dhārē* : Sanskritic ritual at which the bride is given as a gift to the bridegroom. Also referred to as *kanyadana*.

<sup>1</sup> All statements in square brackets are my own. They do not occur in the documents.

2) Note the use of the English legal term 'damages' in the document.

#### DOCUMENT IV :

There was a meeting of the Madivala Shettis of Mandya and Mysore District at the temple of Mādeshwara in Gudi in Hogur Hobli, to inquire into the following dispute :

Plaintiff (*phiryādi*), Maya—Defendant (*aparādhi*) Shiva.

*Defendant's statement* : With my soul as my witness (*ātma sākshi*) I state firmly before the deity Paramēshwara, and before the assembled caste-elders (*kulaswāmi*, literally, "lord caste") that for eleven years [after Arasi's outcasting in 1934] I did not eat food cooked by Kempī, or have any other relation with her. About one-and-a-half years ago the plaintiff came to me and said, "You must persuade your younger sister to give her daughter to Kempī's son". I replied, "I agree as you have done me the honour of coming and asking me". Sometime later Kempī and I went to Bella in order to obtain the defendant's advice about arrangements for the wedding. The plaintiff told us, "I have no time to-day. I will come another day. Have the *lagna* (wedding) fixed for next month, not for this month." We fixed up the date of the marriage according to the plaintiff's instructions. Some days later Kempī and I went to the plaintiff's house to invite him to the wedding. He answered, "The marriage is between the bride's people and the groom's people. I have no connection with it. I will not come to the wedding." We celebrated the marriage. We continue to have all types of social relationship with our relatives. I have stated the facts as they are before the caste-elders.

Sd. MAYA and SHIVA

#### Notes :

1) It is likely that all statements by witnesses were made and recorded on 4th June 1946.

2) I learnt in 1952 that Maya and Shiva had married sisters. I am not sure whether they were full or classificatory sisters.

3) Maya is addressed as *yajamān* or leader. I learnt in 1952 that before this dispute took place Maya was the leader of the Washermen in Bella and a few surrounding villages. The respectful way in which he is addressed by Shiva, and the readiness with which the latter agrees to give his sister's daughter to Kempī's son are indicative of Maya's importance. The attempts by Kempī and Shiva to ensure the presence of Maya at the wedding further strengthen this view.

4) Strictly speaking, *lagna* means the time when the bride is ritually handed over to the groom. It is determined by the astrologer. In a loose sense it also means wedding.

5) It is not easy to understand why Maya has signed this document; nor Shiva's signing Document XIII.

#### DOCUMENT V :

[The following statement by Kempfi seems to have been actually made after the statements of witnesses for Maya].

I, Kempfi, make the following statement before caste-folk, with Ishwara as witness : ever since the outcasting of my elder sister, there has been no social intercourse between her and me. All that has been said on behalf of the plaintiff is untrue. Maya, and witnesses on his behalf, Elehalli Lingappa and Boodnoor Mallayya, have been having social intercourse with me all along. Over a year ago I asked Maya to secure a girl for my son. He sent for Shiva of Megga, and told the latter, "Arrange for your younger sister Siddi's daughter to be given [to Kempfi's son]." Shiva agreed. Subsequently he and I discussed the arrangements for the wedding and then went to Bella to consult Yajamān Maya. He said, "I am not free today. Fix up the marriage in the month of Gouri [*i.e.*, festival of Gouri, wife of God Shiva]." When we went to him on the wedding day to invite him he said, "I will come for the *dhārē* ritual". But he did not come. I have stated the true facts before caste-folk.

Sd. KEMPI

#### Notes :

1) There is a little difference between Shiva's and Kempfi's versions of what Maya said to them when they went to invite him for the wedding. See D. IV.

2) Maya's position is high enough to send for Shiva and ask him to arrange for his niece to be given in marriage to Kempfi's son.

#### DOCUMENT VI :

Statement of Malla Shetti s/o Boodnoor Doddayya on behalf of Kempfi.

The plaintiff, headman Maya, and I were returning from Bihalli to Bella *via* Kotti village, and Maya took me to Kempfi's house in Kotti. Until then I had not gone to Kempfi's house, nor had I dined there. After we had talked for a while Kempfi said "I have had some steamed cakes (*kadubu*) bought for you. I will make some coffee. Please stay here till I get the coffee ready." Then we went towards the pond to answer calls of nature. In the meanwhile Kempfi came to us, accompanied by a man of the Okkaliga caste,



bringing with her steamed cakes, butter, jaggery and coffee. She sat her companion under a banyan tree, and asked us, "Why did you leave? You ought to have eaten at my place before leaving." Kempî's companion asked, "Why were you trying to go away without eating the food offered to you?" I replied, "We would not have gone away without eating. We came here to answer calls of nature". Then I said [to Maya], "They have brought food with them." We ate the food sitting on the edge of the pond. Maya did not tell me anything about Kempî. I have stated the facts as they are before the caste-elders. I swear [I am telling the truth].

Sd. MALLA SHETTI

#### DOCUMENT VII :

Statement of Annalli Madayya s/o of Linga Shetti

I am the plaintiff's mother's younger sister's son, and I have been having social relations with Kempî for the last five years. On her side she has been visiting our house occasionally. My elder brother [classificatory] Maya and I have both sat together (*saha pankti*, literally, same line) at Kempî's house, and eaten meals cooked by her. We have all been living in harmony (*eki bhāva*, literally, feeling of one-ness). I do not know anything else. I have also seen Bihalli people and others eating in the wedding house.

Sd. MADAYYA

#### DOCUMENT VIII :

Statement of Rudra s/o Rudra (Snr.).

For the last six months I have been having social relations with Kempî. I do not know anything else.

Sd. RUDRA

#### DOCUMENT IX :

Statement of Kempayya s/o Kalayya of Bella :

I know everything [directly] about Arasi but about Kempî all that I know is hearsay (*dubāri*) and not direct [the actual expression used is "not based on record"]. I am about eighty years of age. I am telling the truth before caste-folk.

Sd. KEMPAYYA

#### DOCUMENT X :

[Kyatayya, whose evidence is given below, appears to be an elder of the Washerman caste in Kotti, Kempî's village.]

We learnt that Kempî had resumed relations with her elder sister after having severed them for some time. We sent for her and questioned her. She replied, "I want my elder sister, I don't want you". We then made a rule (*kattu*) that our caste people should not dine at Kempî's house. About a year ago, Shiva s/o Thippa of Magga,

gave his younger sister's daughter in marriage to Kemp's son. Neither we, nor people related to us, have had social relations with Kemp. I make this statement with my soul as my witness.

Sd. KYATAYYA.

DOCUMENT XI :

[Documents XI and XII are both statements by Kagare Lingayya.]

I swear [by God] to tell the truth before caste-folk. My house and Arasi's are but two halves of a single house. I used to observe that whenever Kemp visited her elder sister, she ate food with Arasi. But none of us went to Arasi's house. When the elders of the Washer-man caste in Kotti told us, "As Kemp is eating food cooked by Arasi, none of you may have social relations with Kemp", we decided to obey them. I am telling the truth before my caste-elders with my soul as my witness.

Sd. LINGAYYA

DOCUMENT XII :

Arasi and I belong to the same group. That is, she is my *attigé* (elder brother's wife). About twelve years ago I saw with my own eyes my sister-in-law sleeping with an Untouchable [Holey], and I reported the matter to the caste-elders. The elders took a statement from her and released her from caste. Since then we have not had social relations with Arasi. Even now neither we, nor our relatives, have any social relations with her.

DOCUMENT XIII :

(Statement of Nandi s/o Basava of Magga.)

I state on oath what I know before caste-folk. About a year ago Kemp came to us to request us, in the presence of caste-folk, to obtain the daughter of Annalli Madayya in marriage to her son. Thippa, my uncle [Doddappa, father's elder brother or mother's elder sister's husband], said, "Kemp is having social intercourse with her elder sister who was outcasted for having slept with an Untouchable." When we heard this, we made Kemp leave the caste-assembly. Then we learnt that our uncle's son Shiva was having social relations with Kemp. We questioned Shiva and he told us, "I dine at Kemp's house". Then we laid down a ban that Shiva may not have any social relations with us till he had performed expiatory rites.<sup>1</sup> I have narrated the truth before caste-folk.

Sd. SIDDA SHETTI

<sup>1</sup> The actual term used is *kula siddi* which is a corruption of *kula shuddi*, i.e., caste purification. The member outcasted regains his caste, and the ritual is performed by a priest before the assembled caste-folk.

[The signatures of the following five men appear below Shiva's.]

- 1) Borayya s/o Borayya (Snr.) of Doddakere village in Maddur Taluk.
- 2) Adayya s/o Adayya (Snr.) of Elehalli.
- 3) Chennayya s/o Chennayya (Snr.) of Saralu village in Mandya Taluk.
- 4) Kariya s/o Kariya (Snr.) of Kere.
- 5) Siddappa s/o Siddappa (Snr.) of Oddur.

#### DOCUMENT XIII(a) :

We the [above-mentioned] five men have seen certain things with our own eyes and reflected with our minds on what we have seen, and we have concluded, like some others who have given evidence before, that [both] Arasi and Kempī have been expelled from caste. This we state on oath.

#### DOCUMENT XIV :

This dispute (*nyāya*) was decided at Sri Mādeswharaswāmi Temple in the presence of Rampura Village Organiser, Sri Kulle Gowdaru. Maya admitted to having eaten the steamed cakes and coffee given by Kempī. Boodnoor Mallayya witnessed the above act. As to Shiva's guilt, no evidence was forthcoming. Maya paid a [traditional] fine of twelve *hanas* into the temple before the elders of the *nād* (*nādu gowdaru*).

The dispute was settled on 4th June 1946 in the presence of Sri Kulle Gowdaru who read out the statement of Maya to the assembled elders of the Madivāla Shetti caste. The elders approved of the verdict.

#### Notes :

1) Sri Kulle Gowda is one of the arbitrators in Rampura. See my "A Joint Family Dispute in a Mysore Village", published in the *Journal of the M. S. University*, Baroda, 1952, for the part played by him in that dispute.

2) The sum paid by Maya is a traditional sum, and it is customary to pay the fine into a temple.

Kagare Lingayya (see Documents XI and XII) was fined three *hanas* (a *hana*-2 As. 8 ps.) for giving false evidence. His evidence may be the source of another dispute.

3) The term *nādu gowda* in the singular refers to a hereditary office held by a Peasant elder, which enables him to settle caste disputes among members of his caste. In the plural, and in a looser sense, it refers to the important elders of the area.



# THE BHILS OF KOTRA BHOMAT

MORRIS CARSTAIRS

## 1. GEOGRAPHY.

The Bhils are met with in a long irregularly-shaped triangle of country in North-Western India. The base of this area is in Khandesh, some 90 miles north of Bombay, and its narrow apex reaches up along the ridge of the Aravali Hills in Udaipur, which is one of the former Princely States forming the southern boundary of the State of Rajasthan. Throughout this territory, which is over 400 miles from north to south, the Bhils show considerable local variations in speech, dress and customs. There are, at one extreme, the Bhilalas of Khandesh, who claim relationship with the Rajputs; and the near-naked aboriginal "black Bhils" of Jhabua at the other. These local differences have been fostered by the lack of communications, for it is just where the country is least accessible that the Bhils have survived in greatest numbers.

In the State of Udaipur, for example, it is in the hilly tracts of the western and southern parts of the State that the "true" Bhils are found. These hills consist of the broadened-out southern end of the Aravali range, and they present a series of close-packed ridges and valleys, the slopes densely covered with scrub jungle and grass, the valley floors showing wide boulder-strewn river beds, which carry impassable torrents during the rainy season, and which, unlike the streams of the "plains" part of Udaipur, usually still carry a trickle of water throughout the dry nine months of the year. This Bhil hill country is known as the *Bhomat*, and it is divided again, by the most massive range of mountain, into a north-western section, called *Kotra Bhomat*, and a larger south-eastern area, *Kherwara Bhomat*. *Kherwara* is a military cantonment, 50 miles south of Udaipur city, to which it is connected by a good road. It was for many years the administrative centre for the entire *Bhomat*, with a smaller outpost at *Kotra*, three days' march into the interior of the hills. *Kotra* could also be reached directly from Udaipur in three days' walking, which involved the climbing of six intervening mountain ridges, although the distance was only approximately sixty miles.

*Kotra Bhomat* was accordingly regarded as the most remote, wild, and dangerous of all regions of Udaipur: dangerous both because of its big game—there are still leopards, bears and pythons

in its jungles, although tigers are now rarely seen—and because of the lawlessness of its Bhil inhabitants, who regarded travellers as their customary prey. It is only during the last ten years that the resources of its forests have begun to be systematically exploited, a process which has been accelerated by the construction, in 1946, of a rough earth road linking Kotra with the railway line running in the plains of Sirohi, 40 miles to the west. This road is now re-made annually, after the rains have partly obliterated it, and during the dry months two or three trucks run on it daily, carrying bamboos, charcoal and wax to the rail-head. Since 1951, there has also been a ramshackle bus, which makes the journey to Kotra one day and returns the next, except when its routine is interrupted by a major break-down. A road is also under construction, to link Kotra with Udaipur by a circuitous route: but although one or two jeeps have made this journey, the road is not yet open for general traffic.

Climatically, the *Bhomat* is better off than the rest of Udaipur State. Its rainfall is usually higher, and thanks to the catchment area of its hill slopes, the cultivable valleys are less subject to the utter drought which is known every few years in most regions of Rajasthan, owing to the great variability of the rainfall in the capricious rainy season. Nevertheless, during the notorious “great famine” of 1898–99, the *Bhomat* was even harder hit than the rest of the State: according to the figures of those times, the *Bhils* then suffered a mortality of 46 per cent.

The traditional crop of the *Bhomat Bhils* is *makkhi* (maize), which is planted during the rains, and for which no irrigation is required. In a year of good rains, they will also grow a winter crop of wheat, irrigated by means of channels issuing from the hill streams. The digging of wells is something of an innovation in *Kotra Bhomat*, though this has been encouraged officially ever since the famine. In a dry year, such as the winter of 1951–52, it is only in the fields enclosed by thorn fences, round each of these wells, that any green crops are seen growing. The wealth of the country lay more in its grazing than in its crops. Each Bhil household tries to build up a stock of goats, cattle or buffaloes: but there are many who are too poor to own even a part share in the yoke of oxen needed to draw a plough. Such people rely on the sale of bales of grass gathered by hand in the jungle, or of lumps of tree-wax, or work for their neighbours, to be paid in kind at the time of the harvest.

## 2. HISTORY.

The *Bhils* represent the oldest surviving inhabitants of the areas in which they are now found, but their precise origins are not known. Physically, the typical Bhil shows a marked contrast to the Rajput

or Brahman of the adjacent plains : he is shorter, has a higher cephalic index, a higher nasal index, and a darker pigmentation. In *Kotra Bhomat*, however, this distinction is blurred by the presence of very many hybrid types. It is not uncommon to see Bhils there, who in different clothes would be indistinguishable from high-caste Hindus. In the same way, their language, believed once to have been distinct, has almost completely surrendered to the influence of the dialects spoken by their Hindu neighbours. The term *Bhili* is used to cover a range of dialects which vary from the north to the south of the Bhil country. Its most consistent ingredient is Gujarati, with local admixtures of Marwari, or Malwi, or (in the extreme south of their range) Marathi. That spoken in Kotra Bhomat is a vernacular Gujarati with many words and idioms borrowed from Marwari, which is the dialect of Western Hindi most widely spoken in Rajasthan.

This swamping of the old Bhil language is the most extreme instance of the conquest of the Bhils by the later Aryan in-comers into Southern Rajasthan. Tradition has it that there used to be Bhil chiefs and kings, who ruled in this area, and that the Rajputs mastered them through their greater skill at arms, and their superior organisation. It is at least true that the Bhils, though themselves illiterate, figure from the earliest times in the historical records of their Rajput rulers. Their association with the ruling house of Udaipur, the Sheshodia Rajputs, is particularly intimate. In the 9th century A.D. the Sheshodia Bappa Rawal, from whom the present Maharana is descended, was reared from childhood by a Bhil chief : and from this derives the custom (prevailing also in Dungarpur and Banswara, two other Sheshodia Rajput States) that each new Ruler, on his accession, must have his forehead marked with a *tilak* of blood from the finger of a Bhil—the right to perform this service being hereditary in certain Bhil families.

Rajput history shows many instances of the valuable assistance given by Bhils in their numerous wars ; and this is particularly true of the most heroic chapter in Udaipur's history, the late 16th Century A.D., when Rana Partap fought an unending guerilla war against the armies of Akbar. For many years he was able to survive only because of the loyalty and assistance given him by the hill Bhils. It was because of his continued resistance, and his refusal, alone of all the great Rajput kings, to permit marriage alliances with the Moghuls, that the Maharana of Udaipur to this day takes precedence over all the other princes in India ; and the Bhils' part is recognised in the emblem of the Ranas, which shows a resplendent sun (all Sheshodia Rajputs are believed to be descended from the sun) with, on one side a Rajput warrior, on the other a Bhil, as its supporters.

In spite of this history of alliance in war, the relations between Rajput and Bhil have never been harmonious. The Rajput rulers



fully shared the attitude of the Vedas towards the aboriginal jungle-dwellers whom the Aryans found when they invaded India—the “Dasyus”, that is “Enemies”, who are “goat-nosed”, and “noseless” and “black”. They tended to regard them (as most Rajputs do to this day) as an inferior, monkey-like people, more akin to wild beasts or vermin than men: and in consequence they were correspondingly harsh in their treatment of them. The Thakurs who were nominal lords of great estates in the Bhomat were in many instances not pure Rajputs, but Garasias, which are clans derived from the natural sons of Rajput fathers by Bhil women. These Thakurs were granted their estates by the Udaipur Rana as a reward for services in time of war. They were not, however, more humane towards the Bhils, but rather less so, exercising a rough justice in which their victims might be whipped, or have their eyes gouged out, or be decapitated, or (as in one recorded instance) a Bhil might have his legs cut off and the stumps plunged in boiling oil for sinning against Hindu morality by killing a cow.

The brutality of such autocratic rulers was only mitigated by difficulty of imposing their will upon tenants who could take to the jungles and defy pursuit, if they had the briefest warning of the approach of the Ruler’s soldiery; and also by the danger that if too much provoked, the Bhils might band themselves together and take revenge upon their Thakur. The ruler’s houses are built in the same style as Scottish border Keeps, part mansion, part fortress, usually set on the crest of a small hill, with a huddle of their retainers’ huts gathered below. A typical one is in Jura, five miles from the village of Khajuria. Here the Thakur keeps the remnants of his former private army, as watchmen. They guard the entrance to his Keep in four-hour watches, day and night, striking the hours on a gong which hangs in the porch, and all the village regulates its day by “palace time”.

The Bhils have never had much sense of cohesion or loyalty to their widespread kin. They have profited by the opportunity from time to time, when the authority of the central government seemed weak, to indulge in local raids: and they have always excelled in guerilla warfare against an attacking force. The mountains were an effective stop to the Moghuls, and at the time when British troops intervened in Rajasthan, to put a stop to the depredations of the Mahratta armies (in 1818) the Bhils of the Bhomat were a law unto themselves. An abortive campaign was launched in an attempt to pacify the hill tracts, but it failed. Instead, the British adopted the policy of recruiting local troops, to help to enforce order among their own peoples. This was done in Khandesh in 1825 (Khandesh Bhil Corps), in Ajmer-Merwara in 1835 (Mair Corps) and in Udaipur in 1840 (Mewar Bhil Corps). From the establishment of this Corps

until very recent years, the administration of the Bhil areas of Udaipur though nominally in the hands of an official of the Maharana's court, the *Magra Hakim*, was in fact carried out by the Commandant of the Bhil Corps in Kerwara, and by his deputy in Kotra, who were known as Political Superintendent and Assistant Political Superintendent, respectively. Their influence was strong enough to suppress major lawlessness, and to make it possible for some little traffic of merchandise from Udaipur through to Gujerat: with the qualification that parties of travellers or caravans were obliged to pay *agwa*, a form of protection-money, to Bhil guides who undertook to see them safely through each sector of their journey. The British, however, practised a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the petty landlords, whose cruelties and exactions kept the Bhils in a spirit of suppressed revolt when they were not entirely cowed. One exaction which was particularly resented was their insistence on several weeks' forced labour from their Bhil subjects every year.

Shortly after the first world war, a movement developed among the Bhils of the entire Bhomat which came nearer to unifying them in action than has ever been the case. There has been a number of instances in the preceding generation of Hindu ascetics appearing in Bhil areas and preaching to them as missionaries of the Hindu faith, exhorting them to worship Hindu gods, to abhor eating meat, and to give up drinking spirits. To many of these preachers, divine qualities were ascribed—one, still remembered by his eponym *Shishapia*, claimed to be able to drink molten lead and be none the worse for it—and they gathered many followers; but each enjoyed only a few years' eminence, prolonged teetotalism proving too much a strain for the Bhils' enthusiasm. In the post-war years however, a new *Bhagat* appeared, who not only preached: "Do not kill cattle, do not drink, do not steal", but also proclaimed that this whole territory rightfully belonged to the Bhils themselves: neither the Thakurs nor the British had any right to lord it over them. He urged them to overthrow the landlords, to repudiate forced service and all other taxes: and for a number of years this prophet Moti Lal Tejawat enjoyed a vast fame in Bhomat. When he travelled about, he was carried sitting on a charpoy, and villagers would come out to worship him with offerings of coconut, as a God; and he was not slow to claim magical powers. In 1922 he assembled an army of several thousands of Bhils, and led them to attack one of the Thakurs' Keeps. When they were confronted by a detachment of the Bhil Corps, he assured his men that he possessed a charm which would turn the soldiers' bullets to water. The troops fired a salvo over their heads, and the Bhils believed that Moti Lal's charms had worked, so they attacked indiscriminately: but the next volley killed 120 of them, and the rest fled. Moti Lal escaped, and spent the next 18

years in exile or in prison, but to-day he is again a familiar figure in the Bhomat, a benevolent old man with a long white beard, who makes it his responsibility to stick up for the interests of the Bhils in the offices of the new Congress administration.

The 1922 "Rising" was however exceptional in its scale. The history of the Bhomat has rather been one of small-scale banditry, and of local feuds. As will be seen, in spite of their centuries of subjection, the Bhils in the Bhomat have preserved to a large extent their own social organisation and their own tribal laws, regarding the exactions of their landlords, and the Bhil Corps' attempted enforcement of the Indian Penal Code as so much arbitrary interference, to be circumvented if it could not be ignored.

### 3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING

The Bhils of Kotra Bhomat live in villages scattered along each one of the river valleys with a bed wide enough to support cultivation. Their houses are set quite far apart. Occasionally a man's grown sons will build new homes close by his hut, but in most cases there is an interval of from fifty to two hundred yards between each pair of houses. In a long valley it is impossible for a stranger to tell where one village has stopped and another begun, but every Bhil is well aware of his own local boundaries, and can tell you who is the *mukhi*, or head-man of his village. The tribe is divided into a number of exogamous patrilineal lineages, and it is their custom to quote the lineage name for identification. The commonest lineage in Kagwas village is *Pargi*, and the headman is Dharma *Pargi*; that in Tep is *Dhangi*, and the headman is Kuma *Dhangi*, and so on. Usually the majority of householders in a village have the same lineage-name as their head-man, whose ancestor is supposed to have been the first settler in this area, but a variety of other lineages also occur. One reason for this is that although it is usual for a married woman to go to her husband's village to stay, this is by no means obligatory. In ten per cent of 170 households studied, the husband had elected to go and live in his wife's village instead. Others may come, because distant relatives have invited them, or complete strangers may arrive, and ask the headman's leave to build their huts within the village territory. The post of *mukhi* is a hereditary one, but it does not pass necessarily to the eldest son: if he is judged too stupid or too weak, the headship may be assumed by another brother, or by one of his cousins. In principle, the *mukhi's* authority is binding upon all members of his village; and in practice this is so too, if he has a commanding personality. More usually, however, all important village matters are discussed in informal meetings of all the grown men, and only if his decisions



are endorsed by the rest will a *mukhi* continue to command the obedience of his fellow-villagers. This institution of Mukhi has been endorsed by the recognition of the landlords and the British : any requests for labour or provisions, or for help in tracking big game or for tracing a crime, were always addressed to the *mukhi*, and it was he who had to answer to authority if his village were involved in law-breaking. In return, he was rewarded by having to pay only half the annual tax (fixed in recent years at 8 rupees per "hearth").

The institution, however, is indigenous to the tribe, and it carries with it a considerable amount of prestige and importance, besides financial rewards. No social transaction of any importance takes place unless the *mukhi* is present to validate it, and it receives a tribute fixed by custom. Thus at weddings he is given two rupees; and when he presides at the settling of a feud, he can claim seven rupees. It is this latter function which gives the *mukhi* the greater part of his business, because in every village at any time there are two or three long-standing feuds which are still going : and these are resolved only at the end of many long-drawn-out discussions. Nearly all these quarrels arise out of theft, or abduction of women, and those who are parties to them "break off diplomatic relations", *i.e.*, will not sit or eat or smoke together until the issue has been settled : and there is a constant threat that the aggrieved party may decide to avenge himself, as tribal custom entitles him to do. If the family members and *mukhis* of the parties involved come to an agreement, the disputants eat opium together, to signalise the end of their enmity.

The two crimes of theft (especially cattle theft) and abduction are still remarkably popular among these Bhils. For example, among 207 marriages in the vicinity of Khajuria village, sixteen per cent were cases of "marriage by capture"—most of these, with the full consent of the bride, but all against the will of her husband or father; and during a two-months' period, the writer heard of seven instances in the adjacent villages when the war-drum was beaten in the headman's house, to announce a robbery. When this happens, all the available men of the village assemble, armed with bow and arrows or muzzle-loader, to try to track down the thieves. If they succeed in capturing him, he will get a good beating and the stolen property will be recovered; but if he is traced to his home, a lasting feud is likely to develop. According to traditional law, the offender must pay over twice the amount of the articles which he has stolen, besides a fine of five to ten rupees : but this is never realised without a great deal of talking and threatening.

If a man detects another man committing adultery with his wife, it is expected of him that he will try to kill the offender on the spot. Bhils seem to relish a dramatic situation like this (and it is in fact

not so uncommon) and they describe a man's reaction with a grimace of fury, accompanied by the gesture of drawing and firing an arrow—and then they laugh, because to them also there is something comical about a cuckold. Now-a-days, however, the offence is usually compounded with a fine of, it may be, 12 bullocks and six goats, or about 200 rupees, which is a great deal of money to a Bhil; but in many cases the offender simply absconds to a distant part of the country and lies low till his enemies' rage has subsided, knowing that he cannot afford to pay the customary fine. In Kalakhetra village, at the present time, there is one such man, who last year was bold enough to steal the wife of a man in Kukawas, the village where there are more fugitive murderers than anywhere else in this district. Every now and again, word reaches this man that some strangers from Kukawas have been seen coming through the jungles, and then he has to leave home and take to the woods till the coast is clear again. It is this sort of threat which compels most men sooner or later to accept the arbitration of his own and the other village's *mukhi*. Another compelling factor is the knowledge that each year, at the beginning of the hot weather, there are a number of festivals and fairs, at which large numbers of Bhils assemble in their best clothes, to dance and sing and get drunk and have a good tiem : and when they get drunk, old unsettled scores are apt to be remembered, and paid off forthwith—because Bhils carry all the weapons they possess, in dressing up for these fairs.

Living in a caste village of Rajasthan, the writer was struck by the inordinately paranoid outlook of the average plainsman. Among the Bhils, one was aware of a quite different atmosphere. Here, the villagers went all the time in a state of apprehension of attack—but here the apprehension was founded in reality. They slept at night by the door of their flimsy huts of bamboos and mud, warming themselves at an open fire, and getting up now and again to go into their yard with a lighted brand to see if the cattle were safe : and still they were robbed. Their women obey perfunctorily the custom of showing deference to older male-in-laws, but in general they are much less subdued than are the wives of Hindus. They work side by side with their husbands in the fields, or go grazing their herds in the jungle slopes (and it is there that love affairs take place). On the one hand, one sees many more instances of genuinely affectionate and "voluntary" relationships between marriage partners, and on the other, the girl knows that if her husband is unkind, she is likely soon to come across a roving bachelor who will readily be persuaded to run off with her.

Bhils seem to like to work together. It is a common practice for five or six households (some related, some merely neighbours) to co-operate at the time of ploughing and sowing, or to dig a well,

or dam a river for fishing. Each village near Khajuria had one or more wells which watered a large area under wheat and other winter crops, and each such well was run by a syndicate of several families. They took turns to bring their yokes of oxen and work the well, and they cultivated the entire field as one unit. At the time of harvest, the crop would be shared out among them all, as follows: one part to the owner of the well, an equal part for each yoke of oxen which had contributed to the common work, and a half share to the family (usually one with no oxen of their own) which performed the service of tending all the others' oxen when they were put out to graze.

The Bhils' economy is hand-to-mouth one, with very few reserves. During the early months of 1952, owing to the failure of the previous season's maize crop, every single household was relying on the government-supplied rations of coarse millet for their subsistence, and many of them could afford to buy only one or two days' rations at a time, offering in trade, wax, or bales of grass, or small quantities of clarified butter. Many households were reduced to one full meal a day, with no prospect of improvement until the winter crop was harvested, three months later.

Next to the *mukhi*, the most important man in a Bhil village is the *Devalo*, or magician. Magic plays a very important part in everyday life, and it is two main types, harmful or protective. In case of sickness, the *devalo* is called for, and he practises divination with the aid of a handful of grains of maize. He is able to announce whether the sickness is due to the action of a witch, or a demon, or one of the village gods, or whether it is none of these things, but just plain sickness: and he will suggest the appropriate remedy for each case. There are many potentially harmful magical influences, but of all these the commonest is witchcraft. This is so prevalent in the Bhomat that Bhils believe that every young girl, once she is married, is initiated into its arts by her older friends. Most of them are thought to be if not well-disposed, at least harmless: but others are very malignant and will not stop short of killing their victims unless they can be bought off. Again by means of divination, the *devalo* will ascertain what offerings the witch requires: and then it is his business to have them conveyed to the supposed witch in secret—because if it is done openly, the witch will be furious. If the sickness still persists, he may then ask: "Do you wish to be swung?", and if the reply is Yes, then the men of the village lay hold of the witch, at the *devalo's* instructions, and take her out into the jungle by night. There, they bind red pepper over her eyes, and then suspend her by the heels from a high tree, and swing her from side to side by means of ropes. From time to time they shout to ask her if she has had enough, if she will leave off devouring the victim now, and the unfortunate woman's ordeal is not over until she has tacitly



admitted to having been a witch. Sometimes they are very stubborn, and refuse to capitulate for as long as two or three days and nights on end. There was one case in a village near Khajuria, in 1950, where a man was seriously ill, and the *devalo* announced that he was being devoured magically by his wife. She was swung for two days, and still her husband died: at that, her eldest son in a fury decapitated her with his sword. This was regarded as the only thing he could properly do. Most "witches" will settle for a goat-sacrifice, or a quantity of cloth, but if they are so malignant that they will not be bought off, you simply have to exterminate them.

This practice of "witch-swinging" is a very old one. It is described in an account of the Mewar Bhils, written by the then Surgeon to the Bhil Corps, in 1875. He says that there are now severe penalties against it, and it will soon be stamped out; yet it proved so persistent, that for fifty years after this, a clause in the annual report of the Political Superintendent of the Bhomat mentioned how many cases had come to his knowledge during the year: and there have been many others carried out in secret.

The *devalo* is not only a healer, but also a controller of powerful spirits. In every senior householder's hut, there is a stone or a small image or a low consecrated mud platform: these are the house-protecting deities. Commonest is the Goddess Melri, with her executive male spirit, Vir; but most dreaded is the male God known as Kamriya-Pat. It is to his name that the little empty platform is constructed, and a house in which he is worshipped is obliged to devote many nights in the year to singing his epic songs, with music and dancing. To show that he is pleased, his spirit comes and possesses one or several of the dancers. Only the *devalo* knows the secret charms which can be used to enlist the help of these gods in striking down an enemy.

Besides these household gods, there are shrines in many jungle glens and on hill-tops, some of which are regarded as particularly helpful when one is going on a robbing, others on a hunting expedition. Besides these, again, there are some of the Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. In Kotra Bhomat these are referred to as: "The Gods from Mewar"—that is, from the civilised, plains part of Udaipur. They are in fact manufactured of baked red clay, brightly painted, in the Udaipur village of Molera, and it costs the Bhils a six-day journey on foot to obtain new ones. These Gods are kept in a little shrine, usually roofless and untended, so that they soon lose their paint and begin to crumble. Just twice a year there is an all-night session of worship, and singing and dancing at this shrine. The priest of these gods, known as the *bhopa*, becomes possessed with their spirit, and is then consulted about the fate of the next harvest.

Yet another channel of religious activity is followed by a number of men who have come under the influence of one of the wandering hymn-singing revivalist holy-men. Such people are known as *Bhagats*, and they sing hymns which are a muddled, imitative form of the ecstatic *bhajans* which are sung by low-caste villagers all over northern India. Few Bhil *bhagats* have a very clear understanding of what their hymns are about : but they regard themselves as being superior to their untutored fellows, and are given a grudging sort of respect.

#### 4. FAMILY LIFE.

Owing to the extreme simplicity of their huts, and the scarcity of their clothes, a Bhil child has to become hardy if it is to survive, and this toughening process begins very early. A Bhil mother usually observes less rigid seclusion after a birth than would a Hindu, and that only for ten to fourteen days. During this time she and the baby are inseparable, but after this she again takes her share in the work of the household, and temporary absences are quite the rule. There is no regularity in the amount of attention a small child receives, except that it is irregular : if a mother has no work to do, she will keep the baby at her side all day except when it is laid to sleep in a basket hung from a beam; on the other hand she may leave it for several hours on end, instructing an older child to give it some goat's milk from a folded leaf if it cries. Unlike the Hindu, the Bhil does not show great concern whenever a child is heard to cry. He simply says : "It's crying—children do cry".

In a flimsy bamboo hut, where all the family sleep around an open fire, there is very little privacy. Bhils say that when they have intercourse, they wait until the children are asleep, and then retire to a little distance : but it must be a usual occurrence for every child to witness the "primal scene". Grown sons, who marry at 16, or a few years after that, are ashamed to sleep with their wives while they remain living in their father's house. They have intercourse by day, in the woods : and this inconvenience is one of the reasons why they soon build themselves first a separate hut inside the old house-fence, still sharing a communal hearth, and they move out altogether to a house of their own.

Both fathers and mothers are harsh in their education of the children, generous with threats and beatings : there is pressure put upon the young ones to become self-supporting, or at least useful members of the family work-team from an early age. There is far less stress on the formal submissiveness expected by a Hindu parent from his son. Once the son become strong enough to strike back, the ascendancy of his father begins to wane ; and when the father

becomes senile, his most capable son simply takes over his place and his responsibilities : for example the headman of Bodi is nominally an old man called Ladu Kheir, but in fact all his work is now done for him by his spirited son Khima Kheir, who is generally looked up to as an educated man, because he has served three years in prison in Udaipur, after being convicted of murder.

There is a great deal of tolerated promiscuity among the young men and girls, with the provision that this must be carried on out of sight, in the jungles. Many such affairs lead to marriage, either formal, agreed marriage, or elopement with its sequel of quarrelling and settlement : and they are the pattern for other love-affairs after marriage.

Habit training among Bhils is leisurely and unforced. There is none of the Hindus' extreme abhorrence of faecal pollution, in fact one of the Hindus' taunts against the Bhil is that he is content to cleanse his anus with a leaf or a stone, instead of with water, after defaecation—a practice repugnant to an orthodox Hindu.

## 5. THE BHIL AS A PERSON

Many generalisations have been made in the past about the Bhil personality, most of them backed by very little intimate contact with them in their own setting. For example, the Rajputs describe them as cunning, furtive and treacherous, although brave in battle : but this is only a reflexion of the Rajputs' own equivocal treatment of them in the past, being willing to accept their help in war or in hunting, but regarding them all the time as vermin with no right to expect humane consideration. The Hindu of the plains describes them as indescribably ferocious and predatory, and has an unlimited awe of the Bhils' magic and witchcraft : this is understandable, because they hear of them only through travellers' tales, and many travellers have had rough handling in their passage through the Bhomat. British administrators and officers of the Bhil Corps have tended to exaggerate both his naivety and his primitiveness; they were able to appreciate his zeal and his skilled technique as a hunter and tracker of big game, because this was an activity in which they could share, but the complexities of tribal law and religion were largely unknown to them.

The writer can best give his impressions of Bhil personality by contrasting certain aspects of it with that of the orthodox Hindus of the neighbouring regions. Perhaps the basic difference is one of sturdy ego-formation among the Bhils : they carry themselves with assurance, look you in the eye, do not conceal their feelings. The Hindu considers it very wrong to laugh out loud, to show anger, or worst of all to exhibit fondness, especially for one's wife or child :



but the Bhil does not hesitate to do all these things; nor is he dismayed, as a Hindu is, at the sight of someone's anger. When I became thoroughly irritated with an informant, as sometimes happened, he would not be abashed, and afterwards he would remark "You were angry, Sahib".

This ability to show emotion unashamedly is apparent also in Bhil dancing and singing, both of which are not rigidly formalised, as with the Hindus, but leave scope for impromptu innovations, and individual self-expression. Every Bhil youth learns to play the flute and each one seems able to take a turn at beating the drum or singing when a group dance is in progress.

The Bhils are in general much more free of restrictions and taboos than are their Hindu neighbours. They relish eating meat (in secret even beef) and drinking spirits; and above all they relish making love. Sex has none of the connotations of danger and sin and loss of manly power which Hindus attribute to it: it is to be enjoyed, and if it is indulged in with another man's wife, the risk and the possible fighting are to be enjoyed also. Bhils are remarkably resilient in the face of material hardship. They are optimistic not in the passive, dependent way of those Hindus whose day-dreams are of a god-like figure appearing and giving them riches and kindnesses, but with the sentiment: "See, I have enough to eat to-day: I'm sure I'll manage to find something to eat tomorrow too". The Hindu abhors a gloomy prognosis, hates to look on the black side, even when that accords with reality; hence it is the recognised thing that a Hindu magical-healer must never diagnose a fatal illness as such: he must always utter the formula: "It will get better". A Bhil *devalo*, on the other hand, will sometimes pronounce in the most matter-of-fact way: "This is an illness from which he will not recover".

In general, I found among Bhils a greater stress on individual characteristics and wishes, and a much greater freedom of individual self-expression than among caste-Hindus. If this is true of the men, it still more true of the women. Although they are debarred from many important functions in the tribe, the women too are personalities and do not hesitate to assert themselves. Often it is they who take the initiative in love affairs; and often one sees a Bhil appearing in public side by side with his wife, openly talking and laughing with her, consulting her opinion and even showing an affectionate regard for her, a conduct which orthodox Hindus would condemn as lacking in restraint and decorum.

## RESEARCH NEWS AND VIEWS

The Government of Sudan has put forward a scheme, known as the Victoria-Albert-Jonglei scheme for control of the Nile, one of the broadest hydrological plans adopted by the Sudan Government. The repercussions on the lives and interests of the people who live along the banks of this river will be considerable and for this reason the Sudan Government set up in 1945 a special commission known as the Jonglei Investigation Team to examine the effects and, where necessary, to suggest remedies.

In the *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. xxxiii, Part I, has been published a detailed account of this huge project, its effects on local interests, and the problems which will arise. The account gives details about conditions in the Nile valley as they exist at present, an outline of the plan for Nile control, forms of storage and flood-protection storage, what will be the situation in the Nile valley when this scheme is completed, effects of the Project on physical conditions of the regions involved and human problems involved. It tries to outline in brief the pasture-problems of the people, problems arising out of the inland domestic water supplies, local interests like navigation and communication, flood-protection, and finally the remedial measures.

This project when completed, will have considerable effect on the national economy of Egypt. In the rather tense political situation that exists in Egypt at present, what will be the reaction to this project, can hardly be predicted. But it certainly will be great on the lives of the people of the Nile valley whom it aims at benefiting by controlling the Nile and taming her wild waters for serving the people.

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Every national culture, in the course of its development, evolves classes or castes, religious, economic, professional and so on. These differences are necessarily reflected in the attitudes which the members of one class assume towards those of another. These individual attitudes find expression in appropriate language forms. This tendency to use linguistic forms to denote class distinctions is especially strong in East Asia. In Japan it has been (or rather had been till democratic tendencies appeared in Japanese society through Euro-American contact after World War II), developed to a high degree of complexity. The Imperial system in Japan with its hierarchal court society, the feudal class structure, Shogunate authority and Samurai traditions fostered the institutionalisation of such

distinctions and the almost compulsory use of expressions denoting these in the spoken language.

The use of honorific expressions has been prescribed with a high degree of precision by Japanese traditions, expressed politically in the Lord-vassal, public official-subject relationship, and economically in the landlord-tenant relationship, or even in the business world in the relationship between proprietor and employee. It appears in family relations between ancestor-descendant, husband-wife, father-children, eldest son-younger children, and between more respected friends and acquaintances.

Honorific Expressions of Personal Attitudes in spoken Japanese by Hide Shohora, Occasional Papers no. 2 (Published by the University of Michigan Press).

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The journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, vol. Lxxxii, Part II has published an informative paper on basal metabolism, race and climate by D. F. Roberts of the Anthropology Laboratory, Department of Human Anatomy University Museum, Oxford.

The investigation on basal metabolism by a combination of geographical and statistical methods has yielded a number of encouraging results and interesting inferences. The results of the study show several striking features—the importance of the relationship of basal metabolism of indigenous groups to mean environmental temperature, an association hitherto neglected in the establishment of so-called “normal” values and contrary to the axiom that the total basal heat production of the body is determined by its surface area. The three factors—temperature, weight and stature, together account for the greater part of the total variability in mean basal metabolism.

This is also important for the study of the morphology of the human body. It indicates a mechanism by which variations in the morphology of the body in response to environmental demands may be understood.

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The Indonesian element in Melanesian (language) is the theme of an interesting paper by Guy Powell, (published in the Journal of the Polynesian Society, Wellington, N.Z.). On the basis of concrete instances from Melanesian, he shows an affinity between it and the Indonesian languages. This is important, particularly with



reference to primitive cultures without written records, where linguistic relationship unaccompanied by community of race, may be the only surviving evidence of an ancient contact. The acceptance of this thesis would thus mean a large-scale recasting of presently accepted theories about early inter-cultural contacts in West-Central Pacific Islands.

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The institution of magico-religious leadership plays an important role in the social life of a 'savage' community. He (or she) is considered to be the custodian of the communal traditions and is regarded as the final judge in matters of social importance to the community. His help is invariably sought by the community or individuals, in times of distress and calamity, disease and death. He is the tribal medicine-man, and nobody knows the *pharmacopia* more than he does; he knows all about herbs and their uses and values, about talismans and amulets and their potency, about malaevolent spirits who always meddle in human affairs and need be kept satisfied or tightened, particularly when the individual or the community is engaged in some important business, *e.g.*, sowing or harvesting, hunting, fishing, manufacturing tools and weapons or engaged in warfare with a neighbouring group. He is the diviner, and diagnoses diseases and interprets dreams; he is the priest and offers sacrifices and worship on his own behalf and on behalf of the community; he keeps in constant communion with the spirits and is able to forecast events and suggest 'ways-out'.

The personality of this magico-religious leader thus provides an interesting study for the anthropologist. How is he selected? How consecrated and educated? What are his functions and activities? And how may he be identified from the rest of the people? The person of this leader is regarded as sacred and must not be touched while 'possessed'. In as much as he is selected (by divine suggestion) for this high office, he is prescribed a totally or partially a-social life; things that are ordinarily tabooed are permitted in his case; on the other hand, he is sometimes denied a common way of life. His whole personality reflects an uncommon and out of the ordinary character; and this is considered to be useful to him in pursuing his supernatural activities.

—Religion and Magic among the Isneg by Monie Vanoverbergh, *Anthropos*, vol. 48, Fasc. 3-4.

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An interesting concept of disease is to be found among the Canadian Dakota. They believe that sickness and disease is caused by an ancestor's sin. Thus a person falls sick or is disabled because his parents or somebody on the ancestral line did something which he or she ought not to have done according to native custom (Taboo).

This belief is certainly not less emphatic among the least acculturated persons, a fact which suggests that the concept is aboriginal among the Dakota or in some other group with which they have had contacts. It is believed that this concept was once widely held in Plains Cultures of Northern America.

—Ruth Sawtell Wallis and Wilson D. Wallis, *South western journal of Anthropology*, vol. IX, No. 4.

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Bali is one of the dwindling member of islands of Indonesia that largely retains its basic social structure and moral organisation. The persistence of tradition and the Balinese ability to adapt the new to the ways of the old are exemplified by the village society and the pattern of rural organisation. Balinese culture today exhibits great variety and contains elements of Javanese, Hindu, Muslim and other as well as indigenous origin. But it has its own unique character—the Bali culture.

The Bali village is primarily a religious community. Rural society is divided into several structural categories based on tradition and functions. The process of social change in Bali is going on rapidly, but it seems that the structure of Balinese rural society will continue to exist for a long time to come.

—Village Society and Rural Organisation in Bali by Justus M. vander Kroeft, *Rural Sociology*, vol. XVIII, No. 2.

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What can be the socio-economic consequence of the waning of the domestic servant institution in a society where a person's traditional status is understood in terms of the number of servants he keeps? An analytical picture of this situation can be found in the paper of Anderson and Bowman, "The Vanishing Servant and the Contemporary Status System of the American South", published in the *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. LIX, no. 3, 1953. The disappearance of servants from households, sociologically speaking,

manifests a shift from familistic towards impersonal and equalitarian culture traits. The changing servant pattern is not merely an economic adjustment, it is also a phase of cultural revolution.

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What is "progress"? Is it possible in any valid sense to speak of mankind, or of any human society, as "progressing"? If it is, can we find in mankind's history any evidence of a tendency to "progress", rather than towards retrogression? Is there any warrant for assuming that the movement of human history either has been in the past or will be in the future, necessarily "progressive"? Is "progress" a natural law of development, either for human societies or for human nature itself? These are some of the very interesting questions Prof. G. D. H. Cole reconsiders in his review article on the Idea of Progress (*The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. iv, no. 3.)

Reviewing the whole history of mankind, we cannot claim that it is a continuous advance in the direction of human good and welfare. There have been "Dark Ages", and we cannot be sure that there are no further dark ages ahead. Progress thus does not seem to be guaranteed by historical law, but is rather based on constant human efforts with goodwill, courage and skill to tackle the tasks which nature puts before man.

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Race Prejudice today is considered to be one of the most dangerous diseases that have crept into the organism of the present day human society. In America or in South Africa, this has taken the form of a serious hostility shown by the "whites" against the "black" populations—Negroes and Indians, respectively. This has brought the problem of race, race-mixture and race-prejudice to the fore and social scientists all the world over are trying to find a theory for such a prejudice and its solution.

Prejudice, racial or religious or linguistic or economic or cultural, is a universal phenomenon, and has been so ever since man learnt to compete with his fellow-beings for the satisfaction of his desires. So long as he depends for his success, whether financial success or some other gain on another man's failure, he will almost inevitably employ any excuse to make the other man's failure more certain; race provides one such excuse. Prejudice thus is the symptom of a disease, not the disease itself. The real trouble appears to lie in



the basic economic and social insecurity by which so many individuals are plagued, continuously or at intervals. Whenever this insecurity increases, we may expect that friction between sub-groups in the community will be aggravated. The only lasting cure will consist of changes in our society that will minimise the competition for subsistence and status, and make every individual reasonably certain that he will not be denied the economic necessities and the personal gratifications of life.

—Isacque Graeher in *Social Research*,  
vol., XX, no. 3, 1953.

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Adrian C. Mayer writes in *Man In India*, Volume 34, No. 1 about the interpersonal relations among the Indians settled in Fiji. He finds the usual pattern of avoidance and joking relationship, respectful avoidance and respectful equality. The interesting part of the article is that wherein such a fourfold pattern is shown to help in ordering relationships which have come into existence through the extension of the kin groups, through adoption for instance.

Opinion varies among these people according to whether they are India-born or Fiji-born. In certain cases the former dominate and in others the latter. Thus, for instance, the former are strong supporters of the joint family, and consequently of a particular pattern of interpersonal relationship, whereas the latter are against the same. The Indian born constitute only 10% of the rural settlements' population and will soon disappear totally as an influence, considering the fact that they all belong to the senior age group.

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Volume XIV, No. 3 of the *Indian Journal of Social Work* published in December last, is a special number on tribal welfare. Besides various other articles, the issue carries a contribution from Tarak Chandra Das of Calcutta University on the Social organisation of the Indian tribal peoples. He writes that the social structure of these tribes may be roughly divided into seven different types. "This division is based on the different types of units found in a tribe of the nature of their inter relations. The most important function of these units is regulation of marriage. Some of these are endogamous, some exogamous, some orthogamous (this word has been coined to indicate marriage with persons of selected group), and some agamous." The seven types are ;—

1. Agamous tribe with agamous local groups subdivided into exogamous families; (2) endogamous tribe with exogamous clans subdivided into exogamous families; (3) endogamous tribe with exogamous moieties subdivided into exogamous families; (4) endogamous tribe with exogamous phratries sub-divided into exogamous clans which are further sub-divided into exogamous families; (5) endogamous tribe with exogamous moieties divided into exogamous phratries sub-divided into exogamous clans further divided into exogamous families; (6) endogamous tribe with exogamous sub-tribes divided into exogamous clans further divided into exogamous families; and (7) endogamous tribe with orthogamous clans divided into exogamous sub-clans sub-divided into exogamous families. The author says that the social organization of the tribal peoples of India is in a state of flux.

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Writing a review in the *American Anthropologist*, Volume, 56, February 1954, G. C. Homans, the well-known author of "The Human Group", says that the term function can have three meanings: quasi-mathematical, Durkheimian or Redcliffe-Brownian and Malinowskian. In developing a full theory of social structure, the author writes, we have to look at the three aspects of all recurrent activity represented by the three meanings of function. Whenever Redcliffe-Brown deals with the interdependence of institutions he is "admirable". He (R-B) indicates in his work the contribution which institutions make to the maintenance of the whole society, "and takes first steps towards coping with it." And as regards his study of institutions in terms of the degree to which they meet the interests of individuals "the very honesty and lucidity of his argument enables us where the gaps in theory lie. No other anthropologist has done so much. Surely this is the most important contribution to anthropology in our time.....".

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H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark contributes an illustrated note to *Man*, Volume LIII, on the peculiar sleeping postures of Tibetans he observed in Ladak (Kashmir). Ostensibly to keep warm, they crowd together round the fire, kneel down side by side and rest their faces on the upturned palms of their hands resting on ground. Doctors have told H. R. H. the Prince that such a posture is likely to accelerate blood circulation, as compared to the outstretched sleeping posture, and will consequently keep a person warmer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Dilip Kumar Sen of the Anthropology Department, Lucknow University, read a paper on some blood group investigations conducted by him in West Bengal before the 1954 session of the Indian Science Congress, Anthropology Section; the same has been published in *Man In India*, volume 34, No. 1.

The author examined 1,023 blood samples from the rural population of Sarisha-Kalagachi (South Bengal), and arranged the genes  $p$  and  $q$  in gradients of descending order to assess their position in the hierarchy of castes. He found among the Paundra-Kshatriyas the highest B percentage (46.62) found anywhere in North India so far. This corroborates the findings of earlier workers on the same group.

Among the two upper castes, Kayasthas and Brahmins, he found an interestingly wide divergence. Kayasthas showed 20.14% of A and 34.53% of B, whereas the Brahmins showed 38% of A and 27% of B.



## REVIEWS

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THE PRIMITIVE WORLD AND ITS TRANSFORMATIONS BY  
ROBERT REDFIELD ; CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS, NEW YORK,  
1953 ; PP. xiii+185 ; RS. 16-10-0.

Here is a very interesting book, based on the Messenger Lectures on the Evolution of Civilization delivered at Cornell University in winter 1952. Redfield is very well-known for his work on the 'process' of urbanization of the folk society, and for the considerable amount of thinking he has stimulated, on this topic among his followers and critics. Some of his critics have complained that his approach has been 'a-historical'. Is the book under review his reply to such criticism? In these pages he does not look for the process of change in the current and contemporary social life of a folk society or two. Instead the unit of his study becomes mankind spread over all time and space : and the object of his study the transformation of man that came about as a result of civilisation. This sounds impressive and ambitious : and will raise numerous protests. Sorokin (*Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis*, 1952) finds it difficult to accept civilizations, as adopted by Toynbee, as valid units of study because they are vague and do not qualify as meaningful systems. Redfield's unit of study, mankind divided into folk and urban types, does not make a more meaningful unit of study than do Toynbee's civilizations. Redfield may be right in asserting that compared to folk society, all civilisations are one and not many, not twenty-one as listed by Toynbee. But his types, folk and urban, are not only ideal types in the Weberian sense, they are also vague and inadequate, even when the transitional peasant type is taken into account. It is just impossible to condense all types of known societies under these three broad headings only. It would be unscientific, for instance, to bracket together the non-urban rural and tribal groups of India. The inadequacy of Redfield's typology arises out of his neglect of structural differences between types.

Redfield's methodology is perhaps the best that could be put to service ; he combines the findings of archaeology and ethnology. Archaeology gives us evidences of pre-urban life of societies which existed before the rise of cities ; and ethnology tells us about contemporary non-urban societies as yet unaffected by civilisation. The neglect of history forced upon the student of contemporary preliterate societies is compensated for by the historical nature of the archaeologists' findings : and the emphasis upon the material aspect of life only so characteristic an imperative of the archaeologists' work is balanced by the ethnologists' total-culture studies.

The basic theme of the book is that whereas all societies, folk and urban, consist of moral and technical orders—by moral order is meant that basis of social relationships which is governed by human sentiments, obligations and some conception of what is good and right; technical order results from mutual usefulness and expediency and even deliberate coercion; moral order is a function of isolation and the technical order that of technological development, of urbanisation—, in the folk society the moral order predominates, but in the urban society the technical order takes the dominant place. The development of technical order is a development away from the folk society and not quite opposite to it. To begin with, this development shatters down the old moral order; but a new, a fuller moral order gets re-established as a result of the causative nature of those ideas which are released in, and made possible by, the earlier stages of technological development. Thus, it is contended that the evolution of civilisation is not merely a story of material change, it is also the story of, to borrow Whitehead's phrase, adventures of ideas.

In the development of this theme of the role of those ideas in human historical growth, which are the gift of civilisation, and which transformed folk society into urban society and the primitive world view into a modern one; which enabled man really to make himself and which brought about progress in ethical ideas, Redfield acknowledges the stimulation provided by Gordon (Hilde's materialist interpretation of what happened in history in terms of economic revolutions (which Redfield regards as only part of the story), and by Whitehead's idealist interpretation. Although these are the main influences referred to by the author, the careful reader will recognise Toynbee's shadow so often round the corner as to recognise him as the third main influence in Redfield's work. Thus, when Redfield says (p. 25), "The story of moral order is attainment of some autonomy through much diversity" one is reminded of Toynbee's self-determination and free moral will; when he writes (p. 48) that "The moral order grows by death and rebirth", that it is a "perpetual anabolism and catabolism" one is reminded of Toynbee's withdrawal and return. Many more instances can be cited. Redfield makes use of Toynbee's ideas on challenge and response (p. 27), intelligentsia (p. 43), proleteriats and the process of mimesis.

So much about the theme, the method and the sources of inspiration of the book under review.

Redfield erects, so to say, a new intellectual tower from which to look at the process of what has become in past, and what is becoming now, of the folk society. In this transformation he emphasises the role of ideas. This is certainly a new extension of the anthropologists' usual interests, this placement of the primitive society in a new time-space context. It is significant that the beginning has

been made, and it is perhaps inevitable that the first attempts should leave many questions unanswered or only unsatisfactorily answered. I have already indicated a feeling of scepticism as regards Redfield's unit of study and the very obvious inadequacy and negative character of his typology.

There are other difficulties too. Thus, the author makes what is a self-contradictory statement when he writes (p. 22) that civilisation is the anti-thesis of the folk society. On the same page, and elsewhere he writes that civilisation is a development away from folk society. Now, what is away from a thing is not necessarily against it; to say so is bad logic.

On pp. 58 ff. the author traces the history of moral order in the societies of Yucatec Maya and ancient Rome. He points out resemblances between the two. One wonders what the author wants to convey to the reader. Does he suggest that here is the generalised pattern of the development of moral orders everywhere, and that on the basis of two instances only? If so, one is reminded of Sorokin's telling phrase, the sinful progeny of the fatal parental error. Lumping together of all mankind is bound to create trouble. Redfield seems to be conscious and yet unconscious of the importance of time and space; his historical approach seems to be a-historical.

The author regards religion as an index to the state of moral order (chap. III). Does he mean to suggest that without religion there can be no moral order? If so, is such a stand consistent with his theory of re-establishment of the moral order at a higher level?

To cut short a long list of difficulties, what does the author mean when he writes (p. 141) that the increase and widening of humane standards is a special pride of Euro-American civilisation? Could there be greater disregard for the facts of history? And one wonders why the unity of mankind proves so suddenly elusive in this particular context?

Perhaps the most significant part of the book is its last chapter on the transformation of ethical judgments as a result of the ideas released by civilisation. In this context he considers the knotty problem of the place of values in an anthropologists' work; and very rightly maintains that valuation preceded by objective study is essential, for without it understanding is not reached. He maintains that there has to be a double standard of ethical judgement toward primitive peoples; we have to judge them in terms of their own values and also in terms of their conformity, or lack of conformity, to broad historical trends, of the development of wider humane standards, for instance.

Enough has been written to indicate that the book under review has to be read and discussed.

*T. N. Madan.*



THE INDO-ASIAN CULTURE, VOL. II NO. 4, APRIL 1954. PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS, HYDERABAD HOUSE, NEW DELHI-1. ED. BY PROF. A. C. SEN, PH.D.

We welcomed in these pages the publication of this journal when it was started two years back. In a country like ours where every journal suffers from all imaginable handicaps, it is really heartening to find it striding on. The quality of the subject matter and the get up of the journal have been satisfying.

In the issue under review there are several interesting articles. Shanker Rao Deo writes on Gandhian Sarvodaya Movement; Dr. Zakir Hussain's radio talk on the future of Education in India has also been incorporated. The well known philologist, Dr. S. K. Chatterji's presidential address to the All India Oriental Conference has been published in part.

We would like to make the suggestion that articles should be published in full in one particular issue and not split up. Such a breaking up interferes with the reader's ability and interest in following up an author.

Besides, the quality of the contributions should be got judged by competent persons, particularly when technicalities are involved.

FRANZ BOAS, THE SCIENCE OF MAN IN THE MAKING BY MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS; CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK, 1953; PP. 131; Rs. 8-9-0.

Herskovits has written a slim booklet; and here is an occasion every reviewer must celebrate! Written for the Twentieth Century Library series which is designed to give "the intelligent layman a basic understanding of those thinkers of the last hundred years who have most influenced the intellectual currents of our time", the present volume should interest many besides the amorphous "intelligent layman". Boas, a very busy man all his life, did not write many books. His work is scattered, for the most part, in various journals not available to everybody today. Herskovits brings together, in a summarised form, all that is important in Boas's contributions to the various branches of the Science of Man.

Boas is undoubtedly the 'maker' of modern American anthropology. His contributions on racial differences, problems of growth, and biometrics in the field of physical anthropology; on social organisation, linguistics, and primitive aesthetics in the field of cultural

cultural phenomenon of India the study of three things is absolutely essential; the study of linguistic regions, familial organization and caste. The book under review is a contribution to the study of familial organization with an emphasis upon a linguistic approach. The intra-relations within the family and its extensions, as also inter-relations between various families are studied, necessarily in brief, along with kinship terms, their meanings, roots and social implications. (One is reminded of Levi-Strauss's communication studies, the 'communication' of women from group to group).

The author starts with a plunge into epic literature to delineate the pattern of family in those ancient times; and having done this points out the similarities of the same with the present day familial organization of northern India. Next, she deals with the central, southern and eastern zones in a similar fashion, covering all the linguistic groups of India including the tribal groups. The result is a 300-page book essentially synoptic, but also analytical in nature. She points out the similarities and the dissimilarities between the different regions, and also shows their peculiarities.

It is not difficult to imagine how much of patience and hardwork must have gone into the building of such a book; e.g., the author had to deal with as many as 24 languages of the Aryan, Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic affinities. Such work is generally, and better, done by a group of anthropologists, like, e.g. *The African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde. Nonetheless, Dr. Karve has done as much as may be expected from an individual on such a topic as Kinship Organization in so vast (geographically) and varied (culturally) a country as India.

Minor errors and some vague arguments have crept in, and should be removed in a later edition. Thus, it is rather doubtful as to how far linguistic intercommunication is causally related to the 'intercommunication of women.' (Dr. Karve does not use this latter phrase but the meaning of what she says is the same). She emphasizes it, on p.5. On p.8, there is yet another doubtful statement, "Each caste is a *complete* society within a society, a kingdom within a kingdom". (Italics mine). On p. 70, footnote, there is a vague reference to "the Hindu theory" which regards the married state as the highest and necessary stage in man's life. Which is this theory? and what about the ideal role of the celibate? Again, on p.142, "In a society where children died in great numbers there was always the chance of the son of a woman of low status surviving others . . ." Why? Urdu is wrongly mentioned as the script of Sindhi (p.97), which resembles Arabic much more, but is not that either.

Bhua is mentioned as the kinship term for FaSi in the northern zone. It ought to be Bua. Bai is mentioned (p.108) as the feminine of Bappa or Babu, terms, for Fa. So, the suffix Bai should imply

respect. But in some parts of the U.P. I have found Bai being associated with dancers, singers and courtesans. It has also come to my notice that Rajasthanis settled in the U.P. add the suffix Bai to the names of unmarried girls. On p.5 the author refers to the story of Alha-Udan as being commonly known in the U.P. She is obviously referring to Allah-Udal.

There are several printing errors besides those pointed out in the corrigenda. The absence of an index is a serious drawback.

The publication of the book under review is welcomed as timely. It should be a helpful book of reference for all future students of Kinship Organization in India the study of which must be undertaken with an analytical approach and not the puerile purpose of making inventories. The future of such studies in India is really immense.

T. N. Madan

CASTE IN MODERN CEYLON BY BRYCE RYAN. RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1953.

*Caste in Modern Ceylon* is Bryce Ryan's masterly exposition and analysis of caste structure and caste roles in modern Ceylon in a period of transition. It is a study in the dynamics of society. He has conclusively shown that the caste is irrevocably bound up and inter-twined with and is part of a wider institutional milieu viz., family, religion and economy. A research work, based on the intensive field work of more than four years in which the author covered about 40,000 miles and touched every nook and corner of even the interior-most jungles of Ceylon, is qualitatively different from any other work published so far on caste.

Instead of dabbling in the age-old controversial issues of origin or definition of caste on *a priori* considerations, he takes up its study inductively as he actually finds it in its changing and moving aspects, as it influences and is influenced by other societal institutions.

The theme of Ryan's thesis, or rather exposition, is that the caste in modern Ceylon is still a living force touching in some way or the other even the most urbanised populace of metro-politan Colombo and its influence increases as we move from the coastal strip to the interior jungles and is found in its pure crystalline form in the Kandyan High Lands.

Compared to the Indian caste system, the Sinhalese counterpart does not indicate any rigidity of paraphernalia of behavioural manifestations as found in taboos of food, dress, entry into the temples and many other insignia of social distance except in case of the lowliest Rodiya, nor has there developed any formal system of caste control in the shape of corporate caste panchayats. Caste in Ceylon



reproductions of the same from Quennells' book from pages 22, 50, 73, 67, 69 and 43. Anyone would fail to understand the motive behind this non-observance of the common courtesy of acknowledgment, on the part of the author.

Yet for all this author's free borrowing and translation, the book (despite his presumptuous attempts to show off his up-to-date knowledge of Pilt-down man and Bengal excavations) is replete with inaccuracies which probably arise from the lack of a proper background the author has of the subject. The author gives us new meanings of *avunculate*. Race has been translated as *Jati* and can be confused with caste which it popularly means. The two words *caste* and *skin-colour* have been translated as *varna*, as if they mean the same thing. (We do not know if there are 3,000 varieties of skin colour for the 3,000 castes of India.) Consideration of space does not permit me to point out the mistakes in this 'epoch-making' book but as a teacher of this subject, I can say that most of my colleagues will have to unlearn and re-learn anthropology from this book, if this were anthropology. Such books not only render dis-service to science but do a more positive harm to students. While we are engaged in trying to bring up the standard of the university education the writers of such books are busy giving us a swing in the other direction. The book could have been ignored but for the author's ambitious plans (I would call them threats) to publish more of such stuff, as mentioned on the back of the cover-folder. The author would be well-advised to resist the temptation of making easy money in the interests of the growth and progress of social sciences in India which are quite in their infancy. He has promised us four new books on anthropology to be published this year. There seems to be no family planning for the authors, but it is long over-due. In this race for writing text books in Hindi, the interests and rights of those authors who have written books in English are in great peril.

The author has avoided giving a bibliography or a list of select references for further study at the end of the book. We would like the public at large to ponder and think about the future of scientific literature in Hindi.

R. P. S.

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